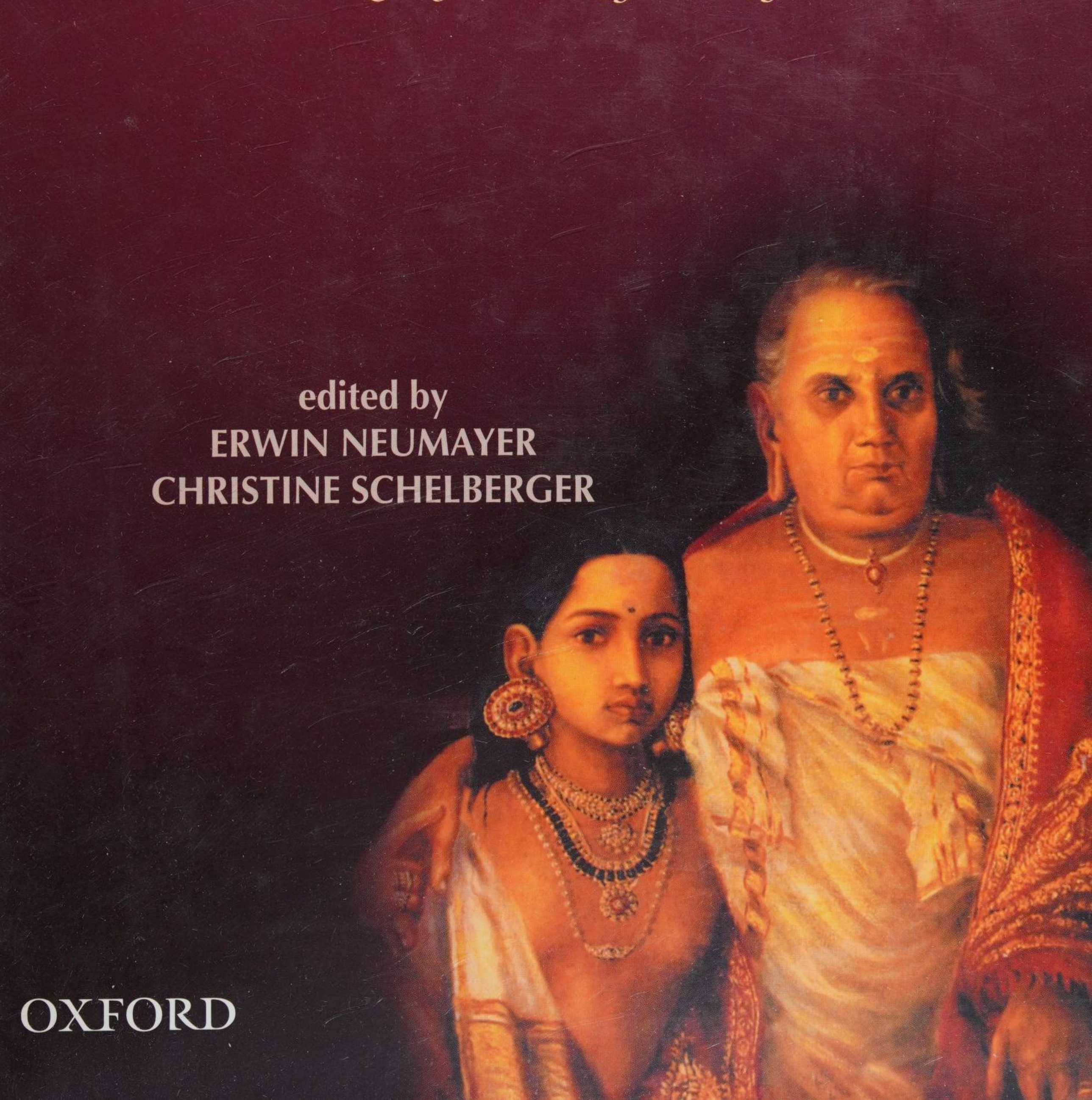
RAJA RAVI VARMA

PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST

The Diary of C. Raja Raja Varma



edited by
ERWIN NEUMAYER
CHRISTINE SCHELBERGER

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RAJA RAVI VARMA
PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST
The Diary of C. Raja Raja Varma

The Diary of C. Raja Raja Varma, a journal kept by Raja Ravi Varma's brother, is one of the most important and authentic source materials on the last ten years of the life of Raja Ravi Varma, one of India's most famous artists. C. Raja Raja Varma was co-worker, assistant, secretary, and business manager to the renowned artist. Their symbiotic relationship is well known, and they are often referred to as the Ram and Laxman of Indian art.

This diary, available in its full and authentic form for the first time, is a huge source of information on the accomplishments of Ravi Varma and the working of his Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press over a ten-year period, 1894–5 to 1905. Over 1000 entries accompanied by a colour plate section of rare photographs, paintings, drawings, and art magazines of the period, showcase the artist's method of working and the influences on his art.

This journal, which began as a travelogue during Raja Varma's tour with Prince Martanda Varma in 1894, mostly chronicles the Varma brothers' journeys while they attended to their flourishing portraiture business. It also contains the only reliable source material on Ravi Varma's great industrial enterprise, the Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press. This press, founded in Bombay in 1894, had an overwhelming impact on modern Indian aesthetics. It introduced a kind of visual imagery, which until this day defines the parameters of popular Indian visual media, especially

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Raja Ravi Varma
Portrait of an Artist

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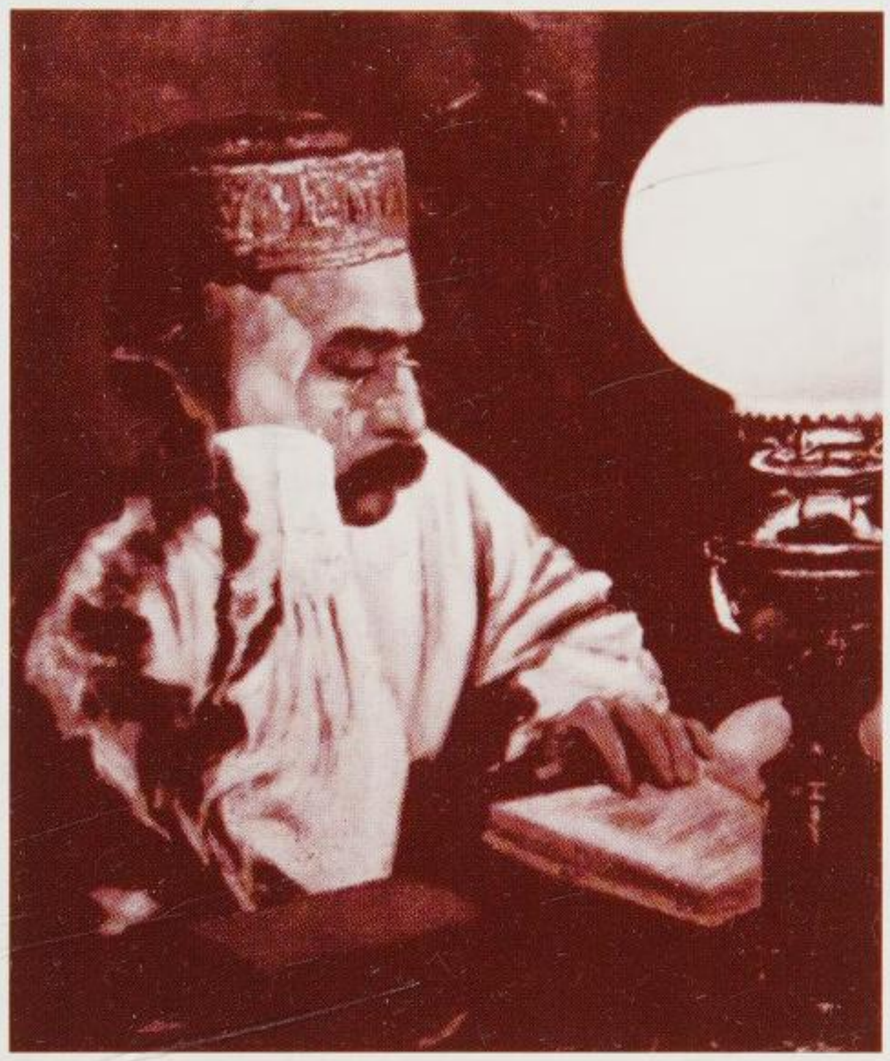
The Diary of C. Raja Raja Varma



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ERWIN NEUMAYER
and
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with a Foreword by Partha Mitter

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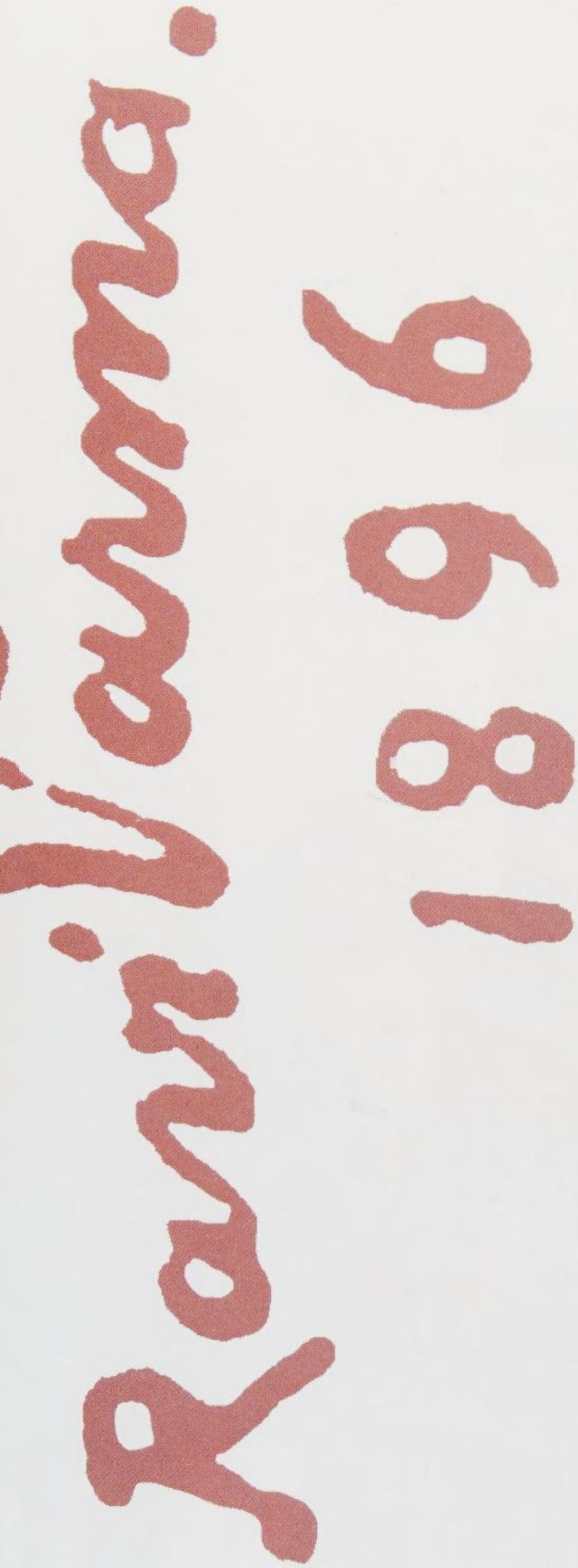

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Foreword

Erwin Neumayer and Christine Schelberger present here a valuable historic document, the diary of Raja Varma, the first Indian landscape painter, which has been known in fragments for quite a while but never before published as a complete text. I used fragments of the diary for my book, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India 1850–1922* for which I did my research in the 1980s. My research on Ravi Varma had led me along a complex and meandering path, and eventually to the diary preserved by various members of the artist's family. It was thanks to the kindness of several members of the family that I was able to use the various pieces of the diary in my work. Neumayer and Schelberger have already compiled a small and valuable illustrated booklet on Ravi Varma's studio in Kilimanur and have also organized exhibitions of Ravi Varma's oleographs. The publication of these diaries, I feel confident, will be of immense value to scholars and of great interest to the general public. Not only does the diary illuminate the life and practice of Ravi Varma as recorded by his brother Raja Varma but also the painting methods of Raja Varma himself, who was an early landscape painter in India. It presents before us the efficient business enterprise that was the fashionable portrait practice of the Varma brothers and helps dispel the myth of Ravi Varma's lonely eminence; there are stories of his never having received help from anyone. Indeed the portraiture enterprise of the two brothers reminds us of the Victorian salon artists, and above all the great French sculptor, Auguste Rodin, who had set up a complex organization in Paris to supply the public with his sculptures.

The autobiography as a genre is associated in Europe with the Italian Renaissance whose liveliest example was the celebrated autobiography by the sculptor and goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini. Autobiographies mark the growth of individualism, introspection, and an ability to reflect on the external world. In India, the earliest and best-known autobiographies date from the sixteenth century. They were written by members of the remarkable family of the Mughal emperors, notably Babur, founder of the dynasty, the aesthete Jahangir, and several ladies of the harem. Autobiographies of artists did not appear in India until the growth of artistic individualism during the colonial period, and they were modelled on the diaries of Englishmen and Englishwomen.

In colonial times, several well-known artists, notably the landscape artist Abalal Rahiman (1860–1931), Mahadev Visvanath Dhurandhar (1867–1944), the leader of the nationalist Bengal School, Abanindranath Tagore (1871–1951), and K. Venkatappa, (1887–1965) a pupil of Abanindranath, wrote down their experiences and artistic ideas in diaries and memoirs kept by them. Among these, Abanindranath Tagore's memoirs in Bengali, especially *Jorasankor Dhare*, were published soon after his death and are regarded as literary masterpieces in their own right. However, the earliest known diary by an Indian artist was the one kept by C. Raja Varma, younger brother of Ravi Varma, the most famous academic artist of India.

To understand the reason for the rise in the trend of maintaining diaries among Indian artists, we need to consider the transformation wrought by the introduction of colonial institutions such as art schools and art societies during the British Raj. Artistic outlook and practice, genres of art, as well as the status of artists underwent profound changes during the colonial period. Previously in India, the artist had a low status, and the distinction between artists and artisans was ambiguous. We have clear evidence of the appreciation of artists by the Mughal emperors, who conferred high honours on them. Nonetheless, their status was ultimately dependent on the emperors' wishes. After his apprenticeship under a master, the Mughal artist became part of the royal entourage. Often born in the royal household, even the most accomplished were addressed as *khanazad* or second-generation slaves. During the colonial era, the status of artists became elevated as they were no longer tied to aristocratic patronage. The new Western-literate, self-conscious graduates of impersonal art schools now looked to the public for appreciation, though not necessarily for financial support. One way of gaining publicity was through art exhibitions organized by art societies—Victorian cultural institutions used effectively by the Raj for the spread of Western academic art. Two further elements were modern journalism and cheap prints, which helped diffuse Western academic art throughout India, even among ordinary people.

The rise of academic artists in India owed largely to the spread of English literacy, as the new élite artists, imbued with artistic individualism, sought inspiration in European romanticism and, above all, in the image of the artist as a lonely outsider relentlessly pursuing a transcendental idea against all odds. A remarkable example of this was the landscape painter Abalal Rahiman of Kolhapur. However, no one embodied this new idea of artistic genius more strikingly than the academic painter, Ravi Varma (1848–1906), a minor prince from Kerala who took the unprecedented step of choosing a profession hitherto regarded as unworthy of the upper classes. Varma made his reputation with fashionable portraits which took him all over India and won him clients among the British rulers and the Indian aristocracy. From portraits he moved on to historic paintings that secured his lasting reputation. Ravi Varma's artistic project was part of a burgeoning national consciousness, as improved communication and better printing technology brought the Indian élite closer together. Finally, Varma released cheap prints of his most celebrated historic paintings, thus winning a permanent place in the nation's heart.

The diary maintained by Raja Varma is one of the most valuable sources for first-hand information on Ravi Varma's life as a professional artist, and enables us to corroborate many of the events in his life and his achievements, hitherto known mainly through myths and hearsay. In 1895, Ravi Varma set up his studio in Bombay with his brother C. Raja Raja Varma, as a business enterprise fashioned on the practice of European academic artists. Raja, the younger brother by several years, became his constant companion, collaborator, and amanuensis, as they built up a lucrative practice. He documented their lives together from that year until his death in 1905, in a personal diary of daily events. From the detailed accounts in the diary, we can reconstruct the career of Ravi Varma as we get an insight into his artistic practices. Contrary to the myth of Ravi Varma's lonely eminence, the diary reveals their portrait practice as a collaborative enterprise. Raja Varma also published a more formal account, 'A Narrative of the Tour in Upper India of His Highness Prince Martanda Varma of Travancore', based upon the diary, modelling himself on earlier English diarists like Emily Eden. The diary contains delightful nuggets of candid opinions on other artists, like for instance John Griffiths, who was a teacher of paining at the J.J. School of Arts in Bombay during 1865–95.

> On a big easel was his *chef d'oeuvre, The Temple Steps*, in a beautifully carved black wood frame, a painting on which he had bestowed much labour and time.... It was poor in colour; poor in execution, and poor in design. We have seen a similar subject handled in a more masterly way by Mr Van Ruith....

But arguably most valuable are the insights the diary offers on the Western representational drawing and painting methods of the Varmas. As E.H. Gombrich has shown, the use of a simplified 'schema' and its constant correction underlies the capturing of a successful likeness in a European naturalist portrait, or the veracity of a naturalist landscape painting. Passages in the diary of Raja Varma reveal how he constructed his landscapes based on this method. For instance: 'The trees in my picture were quite spoilt and I [am not sure?] of being able to mend it. It looks hard and wanting an atmosphere.' Two days later, he succeeded in improving the work, though 'the trees in the middle distance [were] found [to be] most difficult to manage'. The same problem-solving outlook is evident in an Udaipur landscape, where Raja 'changed the water in [his] sketch to a calm surface with reflections of buildings in it. It [was] certainly an improvement, as water in motion [was] most difficult to paint'. In their portraits too, the brothers kept retouching until they felt satisfied with the likeness, yet again a normal European practice. Until much later, the senior partner, Ravi Varma alone was entrusted with doing the face in a portrait. Indeed, the portraits confirm Ravi Varma's unusual knack of capturing likenesses. The Duke of Buckingham is said to have remarked that he had once given eighteen sittings to a European painter, who was unable to do half as well as Ravi Varma with so few sittings.

The brothers owed part of their professional success to their network of friends and agents throughout India. At Udaipur, the brothers' intermediary was Fatehlal Mehta, a confidant of the Maharana, 'with whom

we had a long correspondence on the subject of our visit to this state'. In Mysore, they appointed an agent to look after their interests. There is evidence that their reputation was not created overnight, but through patience, enterprise, and a punctual fulfilling of contracts. As with their business acumen, the brothers' social life and artistic outlook were a mixture of Western and Eastern elements. Salon artists, such as J.-L.-E. Meissonier, were their artistic role models. The professionalism of Ravi and Raja Varma reminds us of Victorian painters. Throughout his career, Ravi Varma adhered to a work ethic, which was alien to his semi-feudal milieu. Yet, his Hindu persona took him on pilgrimages and made him plan his retirement at sixty as prescribed by the sacred texts. His greatest desire was to go abroad to study Western art, a wish that remained unfulfilled because of his fear of losing caste. At this time, few Hindus dared defy caste injunctions to cross 'the black waters'.

We can learn a great deal about the professional routine of the two artists from their life in Bombay, where they lived the summer and monsoon months in order to complete commissions, returning to Kerala every year in autumn. Ravi Varma's day began with a ritual bath and prayer, followed by a long working period, punctuated by an afternoon siesta. The work was efficiently divided into portrait commissions with tight deadlines, and the more leisurely production of works for exhibitions for the art societies of Bombay, Simla, Madras, and Calcutta. While Ravi Varma concentrated on mythological pictures, Raja painted landscapes when he was not assisting his brother with portraits. They spent their leisure hours browsing at local bookshops, entertaining friends, and occasionally visiting the theatre. In 1901, the Varmas saw a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* in Hindustani. In this period the Parsi theatre was popular in Bombay. There were complaints in the diary about dull Sundays, especially wet ones, when the newspaper, which had become 'as indispensable as one's morning coffee or tea' would not be delivered.

The brothers undertook several paintings simultaneously, the studio resembling that of a European portraitist with three or four paintings at different stages of completion. As a portrait was delivered to one client, Raja would write to another about a further commission. Some of their time was spent on altering or making copies of their own pictures, again something that was part of a European painter's daily routine. The Varmas often had to accede to the unreasonable demands of clients, which led Raja to complain for instance about one Mrs Bhaiseth:

> It is difficult to deal with women; they are never satisfied with their dress or ornaments. She insisted on wearing a sari, which was most difficult to paint effectively. They think that the greater the labour they give the artist the better the picture becomes.

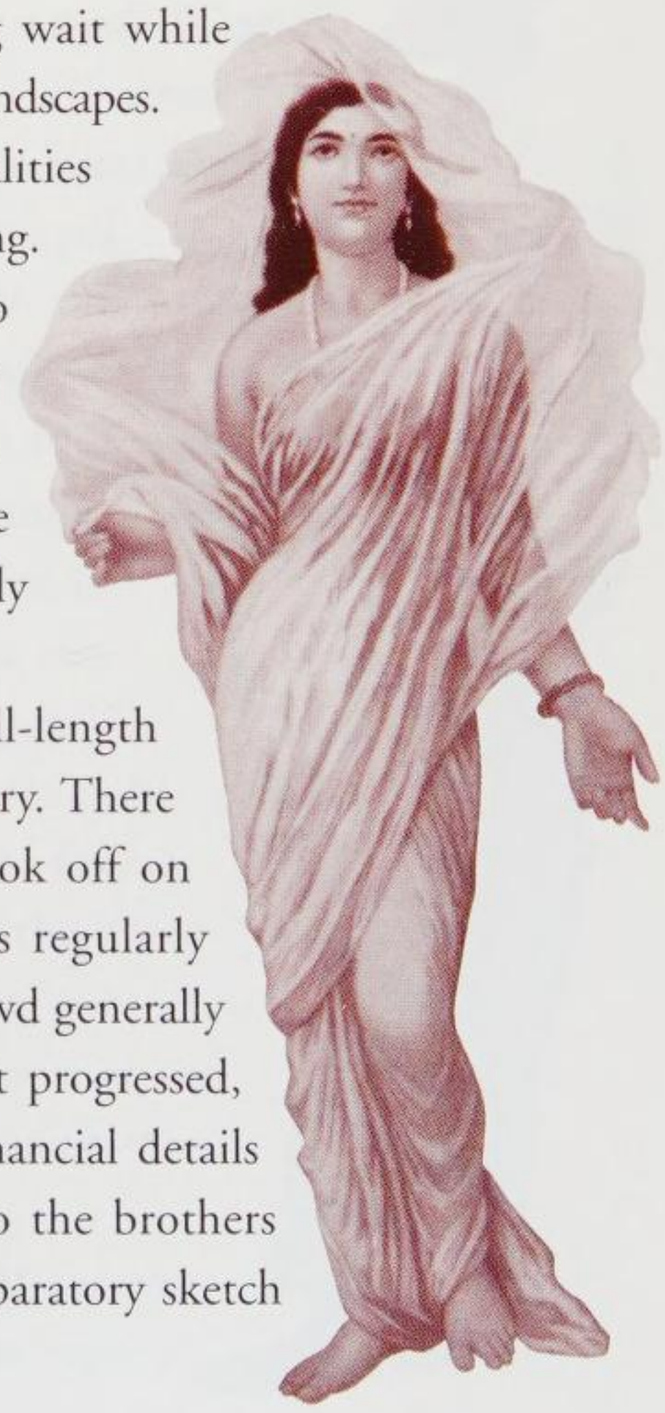
In some ways, the most interesting entries in the diary are details of portrait work. In July 1901, Raja Varma made the following entry in the diary:

> A mill owner…wants his whole length portrait to be painted. He is an old man and readily agreed to our terms. We shall begin the work soon. His son is an intelligent young man and is an amateur photographer. We mean first to take a photo of the old gentleman in the position in which we intend to paint him.

They first visited their client for a preliminary measurement of his face, as they normally did with their sitters. Then the artists commenced the portrait, continuing the next day. The drawing was then corrected and the foreground started. After several days, they painted details of his dress, while in the evening they concentrated on a different portrait. In early August, the portrait was finished, even though the left hand was not felt to be totally satisfactory, and needed subsequent retouching. The portrait thus took about a month.

In 1902–3, the brothers spent a considerable amount of time painting high government officials in Madras. This was the last year of their collaboration before Raja Varma's early death, soon to be followed by that of Ravi Varma's. They had many friends in the southern capital, which was the scene of Ravi Varma's triumphs at the Society of Fine Arts. Here they were guests of an influential friend, and painted his portrait in appreciation. As always on their tours, they brought a retinue of servants with them. Two south Indian judges were also painted by them in Madras for the local bar association. All the while, the younger brother did not neglect his landscapes, but outdoor sketching did have its hazards; as Raja informs us, he was prevented from drawing a bridge in Madras by a crowd of onlookers that had gathered to gape at his work.

Ravi and Raja Varma also undertook journeys in fulfilment of commissions, chiefly in princely states. In several respects, the Udaipur assignment (16 March–1 July 1901) was the most important one of their last decade. Maharana Fateh Singh of Udaipur enjoyed social precedence among the Indian princes. Proud of his ancient lineage, he engaged the Varmas to make large copies of the traditional miniature portraits of his ancestors. The diary throws light on an interesting practice: before a commission was offered, the artist had to produce a sample of his work on the spot. Anticipating a long wait while negotiations were conducted on their behalf, Raja Varma embarked upon landscapes.



In Udaipur, as in the other places they visited, the leading personalities of the area called on them because of their reputation and social standing. Their most important assignment was Rana Pratap as the Rajput hero and nationalist idol. A pandit at the court was consulted on Pratap's accoutrements. A tall Rajput, 'a true knight of old', served as a model. After his form was sketched, Pratap's face was copied from an old miniature and added on to it. The neighbouring hill provided the background. Finally all the elements were put together in the painting.

Impressed with the work, the Maharana consented to sit for a full-length portrait. Raja Varma offers a candid appraisal of his regal sitter in his diary. There were inevitable interruptions to the sitting because the prince often took off on hunting expeditions. While the work was in progress, the canvas was regularly dispatched to the Palace for advice on alterations. The prince was too shrewd generally to volunteer an opinion, but maintained a tight rein over the work as it progressed, mostly approving but occasionally suggesting changes. He settled the financial details beforehand, in order to avoid subsequent disputes. His parting gifts to the brothers were a pearl necklace and a robe. In return, the artists offered him a preparatory sketch for his portrait and a landscape by Raja Varma.

The collaboration between the brothers came to a tragic end with Raja Varma falling fatally ill—the period where the diary entries also stop abruptly. The importance of the diary lies in the fact that it allows us to understand the life and working methods of Indian academic artists in the colonial period, and especially the achievements of Ravi Varma, the most important academic artist produced by colonial India. Without the wealth of detail that we encounter in the diary, the artists would have remained shadowy figures. I end this brief discussion to allow the reader to enjoy the fascinating account of the life and times of the Varma brothers, recorded by Raja Raja Varma in his diary.

PARTHA MITTER
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University of Sussex

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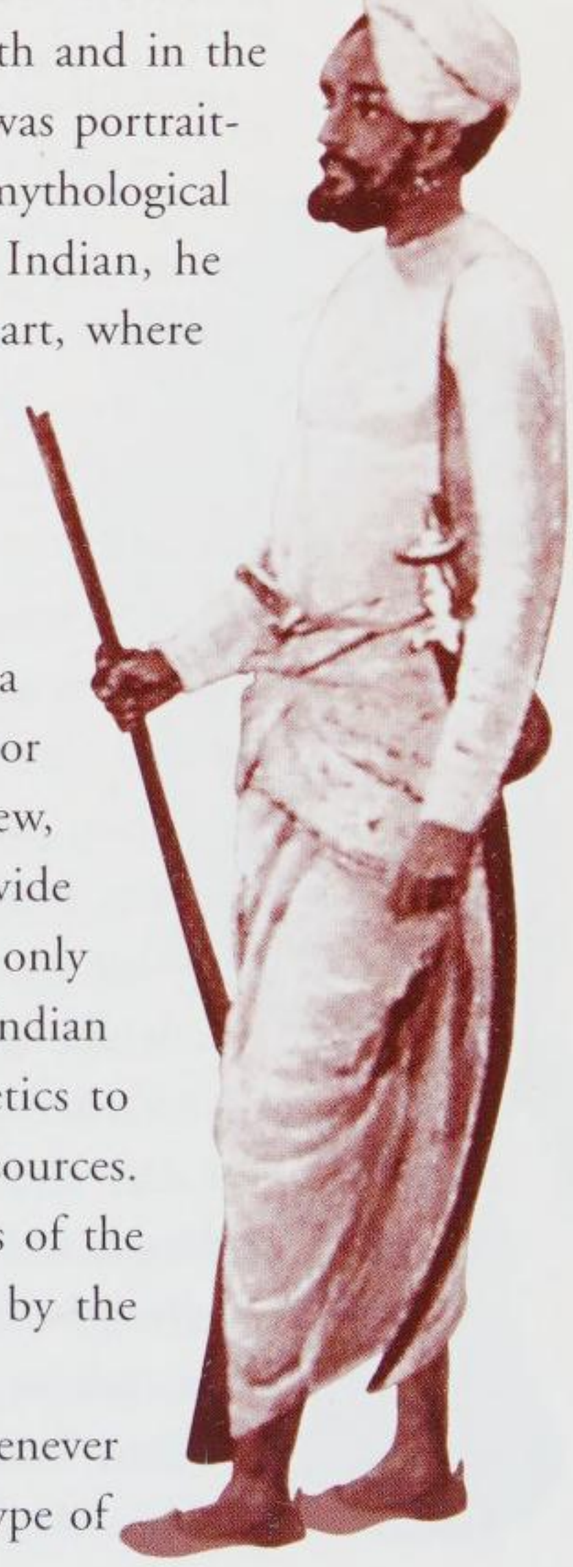
Preface

The Diary of C. Raja Raja Varma is the most important and authentic source material on the last ten years of the life of the famous Indian painter Ravi Varma (1848–1906). The chronicler of this diary—his youngest brother C. Raja Raja Varma—was his artistic co-worker, assistant, secretary, and business manager until his premature death in 1905.

Their symbiotic relationship was something that was very much acknowledged by their acquaintances, who called them the Ram and Laxman of Indian art. Although Raja Varma's own contribution towards Indian art—particularly his talent for landscape painting—is hardly known, he thrived solely in the shadow of his overwhelmingly famous brother.

Ravi Varma (Plate 1A, 3) was, during the last quarter of the nineteenth and in the early years of the twentieth century, the most famous artist of India. He was portrait-maker to the Indian and Anglo-Indian aristocracy and a visualizer of national mythological scenes, which he transferred to large-sized, gilt-framed canvasses. As an Indian, he became famous after he broke into the realm of producing highly prized art, where hitherto, only European painters had dominated. He applied his own particular style of academic mythological realism on Indian epic themes and envisioned them anew for the feudal aristocracy and the newly evolving and acutely westernized urban middle class.



As a member of the high aristocracy in his native Travancore, Ravi Varma broke away from the age-old tradition of his class—the practice of applied or performing arts as a pastime—but instead faced competition within a new, socially heterogeneous arts and crafts movement, which was all set to provide the symbols of the new imperial order. His fame and popularity stems not only from his artistic qualities, but also from his path-finding visualization of Indian mythology. It was he who first employed European techniques and aesthetics to depict scenes from the great Indian epics and from other ancient literary sources. The largest commissions for Puranic paintings were ordered for the palaces of the tremendously rich Maharajas of Mysore and Baroda, who acquired them by the dozens to decorate their newly built palaces.

Only in rare cases were these paintings put up for public viewing. Whenever Ravi Varma held an exhibition of his paintings, he could be assured of the type of

journalistic attention that guaranteed wide publicity. So much so that such exhibitions turned out to be festivals of a yet unheard-of kind: a *mela* for paintings, where the star painter himself would be present to give *darshan* like a demigod—very much an early version of the public appearances of movie heroes of modern-day India. Postcard-sized photographs of Ravi Varma's paintings were widely distributed and accepted as religious icons.

During the 1890s, Ravi Varma saw the commercial potential of publishing quality prints of his pictures for distribution all over India. Here again, he wanted to establish his imagery in a market which was hitherto monopolized by German oleographic prints, most popular of which were the dramatic scenes from European classical literature for the more culturally inclined, and prints of semi-clad women in tempting postures for the more irreverent.

This genre of display prints blurred the demarcations between categories such as the profane/patriotic/pathetic/sensual/sacral, etc. The word 'kitsch' had not yet entered the lexicon, but had it existed, it might not have even encompassed the whole meaning of this art.

The genre pictures which Ravi Varma prepared to be lithographed remained very close to their German forerunners in sentiment and gesture, so much so that in many instances, his heroines and heroes seem to be little more than Indianized stage workers in front of mildly orientalized backdrops.

His 'Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press' was, for years to come, the largest and technically most innovative commercial press in India. From the Ravi Varma Press, millions of mythological pictures were churned out and distributed all over the world wherever Indians had settled. By 1900, Ravi Varma pictures were indispensable decorations or religious icons in every 'cultured' home of India.

Although the Press was no financial success for Ravi Varma personally, it was instrumental—as no other medium of mass communication before—in introducing a pan-Indian system of visual aesthetics. A new vocabulary of imagery became so deeply ingrained into every aspect of Indian art, that later, visual art, be it applied or performing art, or even cinema and later television, had to adhere to the canon of expression introduced by Ravi Varma's oleographic prints.

These prints gave to the fragmented social and cultural landscape of India—the India of many languages, scripts, religions, and social practices—a uniform visual system, modelled on the aesthetics generally identified with the British overlords; for once, these visuals did not encounter any nationalistic cultural resistance. And when in later years Ravi Varma's art was attacked for being hybrid and lacking in Indian sentiment, this did not dent the popularity of these pictures in every section of Indian society. Gods and goddesses had been already visualized through the Ravi Varma prints, those images deeply engraved in the Indian subconscious, and Ravi Varma himself had become a legend, an artist such as India had never known before—nor after!

Ravi Varma's biographical sketches appeared in many Indian newspapers during his lifetime. Most of these were authorized by the artist himself, or were edited and published

by persons very close to him. Although these sketches are important sources of information on the life history of the artist, they contain perplexities and blatant misinterpretations of Ravi Varma's work and intentions. Such mystifications are a professional necessity for a freelance artist—and Ravi Varma with his aura and fame was no exception, since he had to provide his clientele not only with illusions painted on canvas, but also the illusory exclusivity of a genius and his art.

Art history, however, posed other questions. Therefore, the rediscovered diaries of C. Raja Raja Varma uncover a wealth of information and authoritative confirmation of around ten crucial years when Ravi Varma founded his lithographic press in 1894–5, until his brother's premature death in 1905. The diaries throw light on the social surroundings in which the Varma brothers moved and worked in Bombay, as also their assignments at many of the princely courts of India.

C. Raja Raja Varma (Plate 1B) began the diary as a collection of preparatory notes for a travelogue, fashioned on the accounts of European gentlemen travellers on the tiger-shooting and elephant-hunting circuit in India. It was meant to have been published after the upper India tour undertaken by Prince Martanda Varma, along with Ravi Varma and Raja Varma, and a retinue of fifteen other persons during the cool season of 1894–5. Although the book was never published, the completed manuscript, entitled 'A Narrative of the Tour in Upper India of His Highness Prince Martanda Varma of Travancore' (Varma, C.R.R., 1896) was privately circulated one year later. From the following year, no diary entries seem to have been made. The diary appears to have been continued only in May 1898 and entries were made regularly until August the same year. Thereafter, Raja Varma kept up the habit of making daily notes when on a journey. It was only during the years 1902 and 1903 that daily notes were written even in his native place. Intimate family information is therefore available only from this period onwards; otherwise, family matters are dealt with only in a very peripheral manner. Hence, the 940 diary entries, coming from one of the shapers of modern Indian art and mass communication, provide valuable documentation from the period around 1900.

Complementary to the rediscovery of the diary was the discovery of a library chest full of art magazines and art books, several of which were mentioned in the diary. This material shows that Ravi Varma functioned in an art world, which had by then already conformed to the now so often used criteria of a global village.

There were predecessors to Ravi Varma in his native Travancore, who painted in oil on canvas. Long before Ravi Varma took up the brush, Alangiri Naidu had mastered oil painting on large-sized canvases, which immediately throws up the question about whom Naidu learned from, particularily since he produced works far superior to anything Ravi Varma produced for a long time. Naidu's works were of course seen only in the confines of the palace halls and in minute ivories, never to be seen by a larger audience. It is not known how he came to master oil painting. A successor of his, Ramaswami Naicker, was an inferior artist and tradition has it that he denied Ravi Varma any help when approached by him to disclose the secrets of oil painting. Naicker's assistant, Arumugham Pillai, did disclose some of the trade's secrets to the young Ravi Varma clandestinely (as legend has it), in the dead of the night.

Arumugham Pillai's works did not survive for us to judge the quality of the help he was able to render. Nevertheless, one thing is clear: Ravi Varma was not the self-created genius from the backwaters of Travancore who struggled in basically artless surroundings—as he is projected by some rather well-meaning biographers—but a talented painter with an admirable determination to transcend social hurdles and use the advantages of high birth to claim a place for himself as a professional painter.

And a painter he was. In the widening network of communication between socially disparate gentlemen artists and their patrons, Ravi Varma with his popular pictures, bridged the gap between the scientific study of ancient Indian history and literature, and nascent Hindu nationalism. The pictures were accepted on account of their high idealism as the anglicized middle class understood it, and the veneer of Indianness was considered indigenous enough to be taken as a true national model.

The library mentioned earlier also contained a number of studio photographs indicating the working methods of the artist. The historical photographs depict many of the people who are mentioned in the diary.

The authors are deeply indebted to the descendants of Ravi Varma in Kilimanur, Mavelikara and Cochin, who allowed them, in the most open manner, to view and research their private libraries and collections.

Our thanks are also due to the members of the Royal Family of Travancore, who gave us access to their collections in the Kowdiar Palace, Trivandrum.

The joint secretary of culture of the Government of Kerala as well as the director of archives allowed us, within short notice, to view some of the original communication between Ravi Varma and the former Travancore state concerning the proposed art gallery.

Our sincere thanks to Mr Lal Lukose of Trivandrum, who sat with one of the authors patiently, for weeks on end, to translate Malayali manuscripts and books.

The heir of the premises of the Ravi Varma Press in Malavli, Dr Peter Sahu extended his hospitality to us, opening the press premises and showing us some of the original litho stones as well as papers related to transactions of the Press in its founding days.

To all of them our sincere thanks.

Erwin Neumayer
Christine Schelberger

Introduction

C. Raja Raja Varma's name and art are only known within the narrow confines of art historians dealing with modern Indian art. Even so, his landscape paintings are housed in several of the grand museums and collections of contemporary Indian art, where these pictures, of rather unassuming sizes, have the power to capture the attention of the beholder on account of their almost impressionistic use of pigments. The quality of these landscapes is superior to any other works of an Indian painter in that genre and of those times, not excluding his overwhelmingly famous brother Ravi Varma.

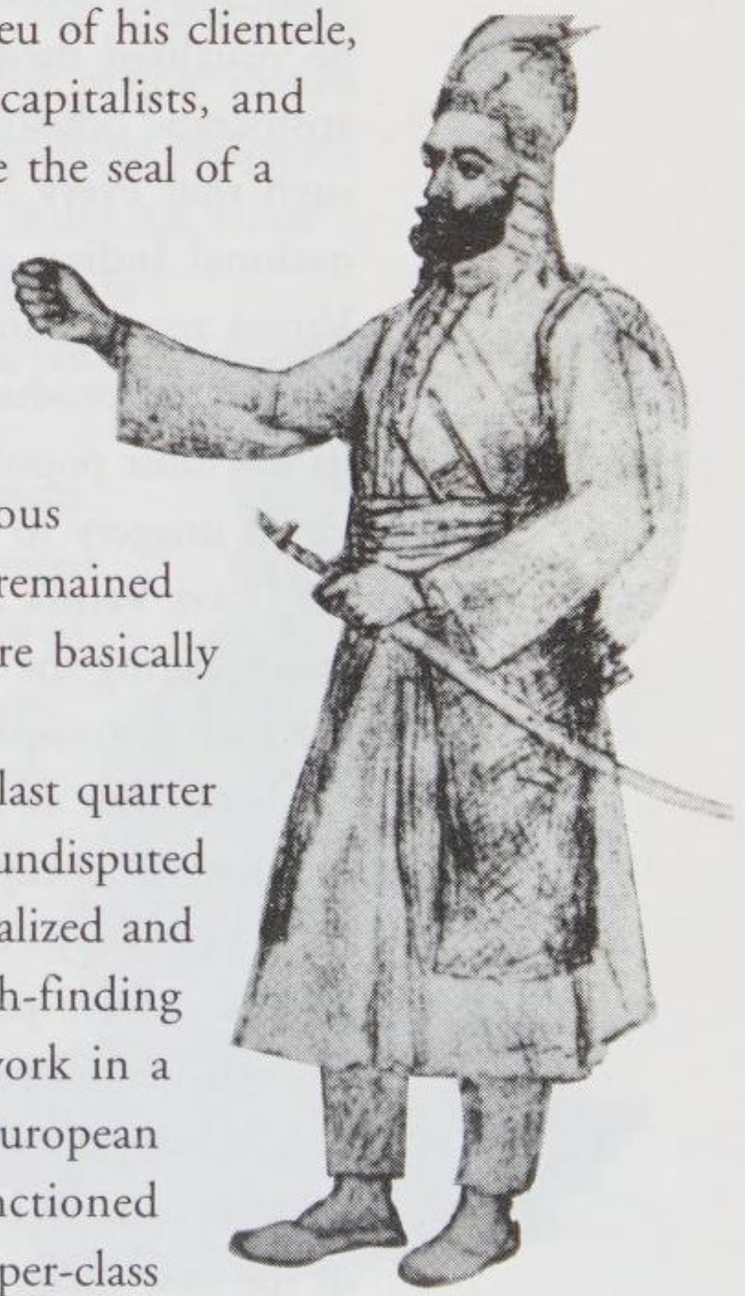
Less known still is that a good deal of the portrait works attributed to Ravi Varma during the period from the 1880s onwards is the joint work of both the Varma brothers. This cooperation lasted until the death of Raja Varma, although few works are signed by both artists.

Ravi Varma's signature, by then, was an indispensable and widely recognized trademark, denoting the ultimate in luxury and prestige within the milieu of his clientele, the Anglo-Indian administrative aristocracy, the urban-based Indian capitalists, and the native feudal aristocracy. The fluid signature of Ravi Varma became the seal of a highly prized commodity.

Who, now, was C. Raja Raja Varma, whose diary is placed here for the first time before a larger audience, and what is the importance of this document for the history of modern Indian art?

Raja Varma's vita is inseparable from the life history of his famous brother Ravi Varma, whose assistant, secretary, and life-long friend he remained till his early death in 1905. The documentary sources about his life are basically the same as those that tell us about Ravi Varma.

Ravi Varma was the most famous Indian art personality during the last quarter of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth centuries. He was the undisputed grand seigneur of Indian art, who, with his large epic oil paintings, visualized and set the theme for the resurrection of a pan-Indian mythology. His path-finding role, together with his personal aristocratic nimbus, allowed him to work in a highly remunerative market, which hitherto, had been open only to European artists. With all his fame and his own blue-blooded standing, he functioned basically as a freelance artist exposed to the unbridled tempers of his upper-class



clientele. They would either subject him to overbearing hospitality, or degrade him by having him deal with the ignorance, corruption, and jealousy of petty court officials and a coterie of lackeys, often ignoring his skill as an artist. These facts are well documented from the sojourn in Hyderabad (Diary 30 March 1902). Ravi Varma had to bow to all this in a professional manner.

Indeed, little is known of the professional life of Ravi Varma. The reasons for this are manifold. During his lifetime, the artist authorized several biographies and life-sketches written by friends and well-wishers. These can be taken as interesting hagiographies, useful only for the study of stereotypes among modern artists: a child prodigy in drawing who practised on whitewashed walls with charcoal pieces pinched from the palace kitchen, almost became the spouse of a princess while still a child (which would have meant spending his days in the golden cage of the court), who struggled against the aristocratic milieu to take up painting as a profession, and so on.

Ravi Varma worked with oil colours, which in these biographies is generally projected as a pioneering accomplishment on account of which he is addressed as the first modern artist in India. However, these biographies have to be seen for what they were—advertisements by and for the self-conscious personality of an artist, who not only produced art but also created his own market environment. In that he was most successful, a personality of modern art such as India had not produced before.

What is important for Indian art history is that Ravi Varma, besides his thriving portraiture business and commissions for mythological themes, also began the industrial reproduction of his mythological pictures in his Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press. With these prints, he was able to address a wide and socially heterogeneous Hindu audience; he visualized their mythology in a pictorial code confined until then to the colonial and aristocratic echelons of the middle and upper classes. The mass impact of these prints was such that every later visual medium had to adhere to their aesthetic frame, be it the national Indian cinema or even later, the indigenous brand of Indian television. Ravi Varma accomplished what no other artist before or after him was able to do on that scale: he acted as producer, communicator, and distributor of the most potent visual mass media in the most populous continent at that time. His oleographs stabilized and unified Indian visual imagery to such an extent that he can be called its founding father.

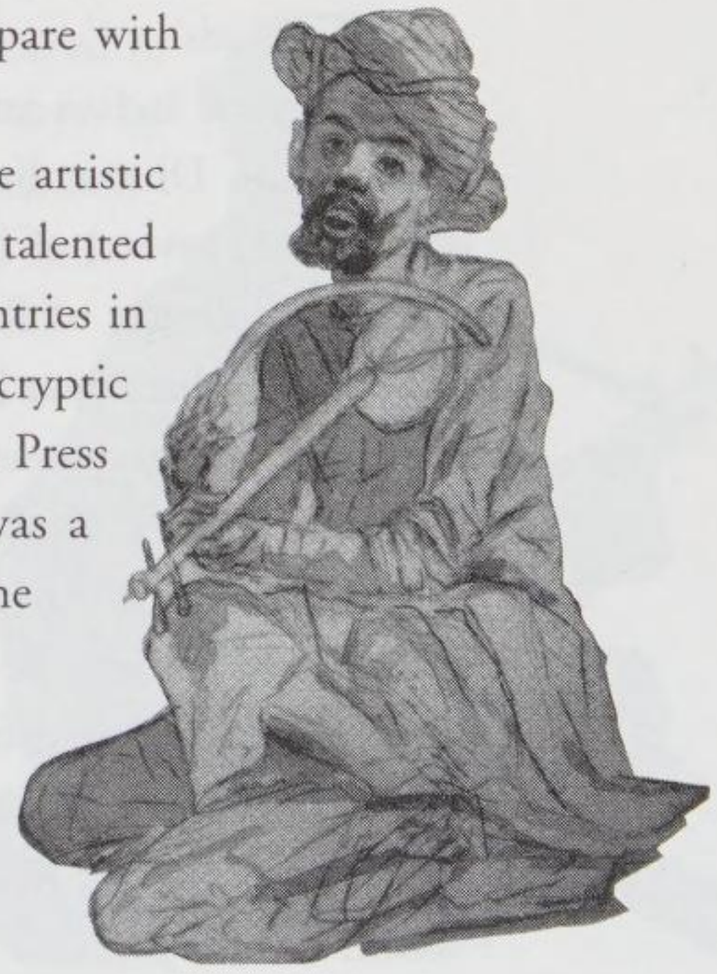
Ravi Varma as an artist might be considered as one of the early Indian gentleman artists during the nineteenth century who tried their hand more or less successfully in the art and technique of the colonial masters. But what he really succeeded in was the dramatization of the classical Indian epics in pictorial art and its broadcast in the trivial medium of cheap display prints. He accomplished this task with imported machinery from Germany. The Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press was, for some time, the largest picture printing establishment in India, and also the most innovative. Several German technicians looked after the servicing and working of the machines and so took part in the formulation of the modern Hindu pantheon. And since art is as much defined by technique as by creative genius, the part played by the technicians in the visualization of the new image of gods should not be overlooked.

Indeed, the history of mass production of trivial prints and the virtual monopoly of that industry which was held by Germany during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is an important key to understanding the development of printed imagery in India as well.

From the very beginning, the Ravi Varma Press was under the technical control of the German printer Fritz Schleicher (Plate 29), who eventually became the owner of the Press after 1903. Ravi Varma ran the Press as an absentee artist, with virtually no control over financial dealings, which were in the hands of his business partner Govardhan Das till 1898. After the disastrous years of the plague in Bombay, when the Press lay idle for most of the time, the two parted ways, and Ravi Varma had to buy his partner's shares for the huge sum of Rs 22,000, which had to be borrowed from friends. The Press was, at that time, situated in Ghatkopar on the outskirts of Bombay. Ravi Varma and his brother used to stay in a small bungalow up in the hills in Malavli whenever they visited the Press. Bombay was just a couple of hours by train in those days. Schleicher and the Varma brothers decided to shift the Press away from the disturbances of Bombay and bought a few acres of land at the foot of the mountain near Bhaji village to build a new workshop there.

Fritz Schleicher (1862–1935) came from Berlin. It is not known how Ravi Varma recruited him. It is likely that Dadabhai Naoroji was instrumental in the acquisition of the machinery, as well as the selection of the German master printer. That Schleicher was an expert lithographer can easily be understood from the quality of the earliest prints which the Ravi Varma Press turned out. He introduced the required infrastructure necessary to run the steam-driven lithographic machinery and maintain the biggest capital of the Press, the store of lithographic master stones. The working language in the Press was German, as the markings on the original litho stones show. Schleicher played a pivotal role in the Press. Under his guidance the Press was dismantled, shifted, and re-assembled at least twice between 1898 and 1901, first to move it away from the plague-ridden downtown Girgaum to a shed in Ghatkopar, which was then beyond the Bombay periphery, and later to the new premises near Bhaji village close to Lonavla. Under his strict supervision, the Press became the largest picture-printing establishment in India. The quality of the prints was very high and could easily compare with imported prints from Germany.

For the transfer of the pictures to stone, Schleicher relied on the artistic abilities of another German lithographer, P. Gerhardt, who was also a talented painter. Although not much is known about him apart from a few entries in the diary—not even his given name is handed down; it is only the cryptic 'P'—two large paintings survived in the premises of the Ravi Varma Press and one in the Jayachamarajendran Art Gallery in Mysore. He was a master of foliated backgrounds, an asset which came in handy for the setting of the Puranic genre pictures. If Gerhardt was a master of the backdrop, Schleicher was known as a master of rendering human figures to the stone.



Schleicher and an Indian foreman—Shriram Pant, a friend of the Varma brothers—leased the Press in 1901 and Schleicher became

the sole owner after 1903; from then on there was no looking back. Under the strict supervision of Schleicher and his team of German printers, the Press became a virtual gold mine. Schleicher ran the Press with a patriarchal hand, leading it to financial success. He was soon the patriarch of the region of Malavli, living in style with a large cellar, well stocked with German beer and wine and a couple of mistresses. As a shikari, he would go after panthers and other big game in his own hills with his own band of faithful beaters (Plate 29A), who, during workdays, doubled as labourers on the steam-driven lithographic presses churning out icons of their gods. The initial two acres of ground near the well at the foot of the hill grew to encompass the whole hill and large chunks of lowland.

The technical heart of the Press consisted of two steam-driven lithographic cylinder speed-presses, which could produce up to 800 impressions per hour (Plate 30B). Tinting and traction of the stone was mechanized, and feeding the paper to the cylinder as well as receiving the printed sheets was daily wage labour, cheap labour, labour to the stomping of the machine.

The large formats were done in thirteen colours, which meant thirteen successive print runs for a single picture and a final run through the varnishing machine, to give extra gloss. Every litho press was manned by four persons besides the printer, who was the only permanent employed person, while all the other labourers were employed on daily wages.

When Schleicher died in 1935, the Press had become a famous institution, well-off financially. Schleicher's will included immovable property in Germany and India and considerable assets in stocks and cash managed by the German Bank. His memorial tomb in the hill above the Press is surrounded with pines, the closest he could get to German fir trees, not far away from his beer cellar—which he had cut out from the tough basalt of the Deccan, large enough to stock a year's requirement of ice beer and German lager, and almost as deep as the Buddhist rock-cut caves on the other side of the hill. If Ravi Varma carried the title 'Painter of the Celestials', then to Schleicher should go the epithet 'Printer of the Gods'.

Several Indian artists of their own standing worked for the Ravi Varma Press. Mahadev Visvanath Dhurandhar, most probably the second best-known name in art at that time, published several of his own renderings of mythological themes in the Ravi Varma Press. A great admirer of Ravi Varma's art, he received his training in the J.J. School of Arts in Bombay, where later he also taught. His images are very close to Ravi Varma's imaginations of gods and goddesses, so much so that it is difficult to differentiate between their prints.

Dadasaheb Phalke (1870–1944) worked for the Ravi Varma Press as well. Phalke was a versatile artist, his oeuvre including poetry as well as acting and directing theatre shows. As a photographer he was an acknowledged expert. After training in Europe, he introduced the photo-litho transfer in India, a method which allowed photographical colour separation and image transfer on to the printing stone. Phalke's fame, of course, rests on his early enterprises in film production. He became known as the father of the Indian film industry.

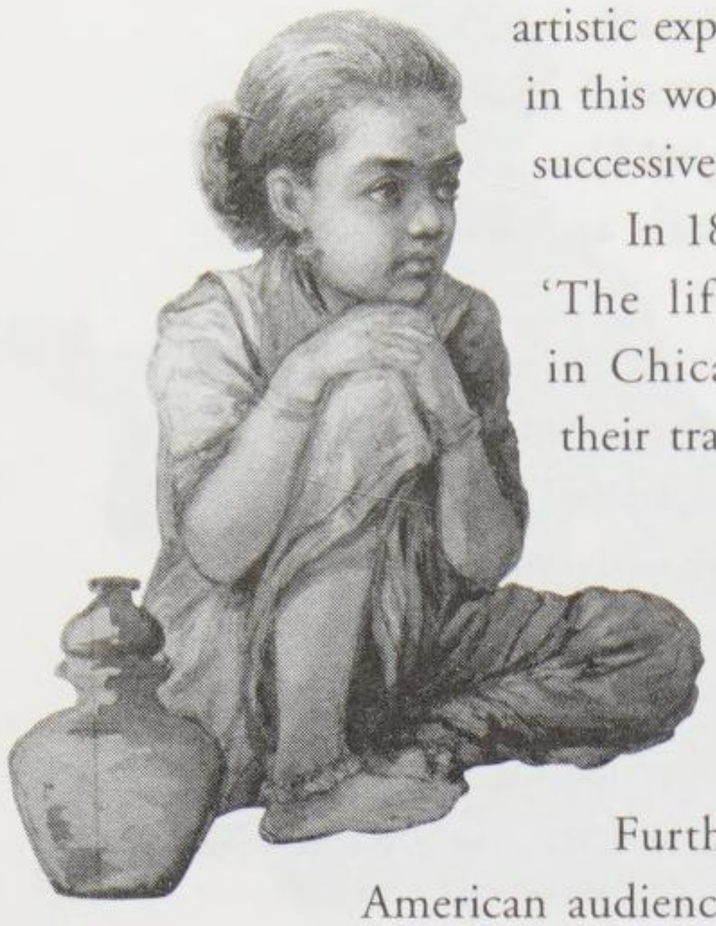
It is not known if Phalke and Ravi Varma knew each other personally, but it is more than simple coincidence that the biographies of the two giants of Indian mass communications should have met just here. Phalke's earliest mythological films are virtually animated Ravi Varma prints, and both were indebted to the aesthetics and make-up of the then popular Parsi and Marathi theatre.

Raja Varma's role in the life of Ravi Varma is hardly ever considered, and even if it is, is grossly underestimated. He was the competent functionary of Ravi Varma, who delegated on to his younger brother's shoulders almost all the organization and administration of his artistic and other enterprises. Biographers who relied on the lore of family members and who knew both the brothers describe Ravi Varma as an extrovert, a talkative and loveable person, while his brother had a rather introverted and analytical mind. He was a freethinker, and much less given to the metaphysical search and speculation to which Ravi Varma had a strong tendency, going to the extent of arranging travel dates according to soothsaying (Diary 25 December 1902).

Raja Varma's diary chronicles the long periods away from their native Travancore, attending to their flourishing portraiture business or looking after the affairs of the printing press. The entries in the diary are mostly unspectacular and somewhat stereotypical recapitulations. 'Our horse unwell, did not go out' (Diary 5 November 1902) is one of the more curious entries; more frequent are recapitulations of train timetables, weather conditions, timings of appointments and health statements. Rarely do the notes give detailed explanations of the events mentioned, but however short a notice may be, Raja Varma always addressed the persons mentioned in an extremely formal manner. Gentlemen are invariably addressed in the plural as 'Ms' or 'Messieurs', the singular 'Mr' is reserved for close associates or friends. Aristocratic acquaintances are titled 'His Highness' where even 'H.H.' would appear cumbersome enough in a diary note. But it seems that convention in this regard was quite strict and Raja Varma even addressed Prince Aswati Tirunal Martanda Varma thus, although he was at the time of their journey quite a minor, related to the Varma brothers more like a nephew.

The journeys to the places of their assignments were done in style. The Varma brothers could command an entourage of several servants, arrayed in the usual caste hierarchy from the cook down to the menials. Railways, by that time, were already criss-crossing India, but if the journey demanded the use of the then still intact water route of Kerala, then cabin-boats and a dozen oarsmen would be at hand. But even so, travel in India around 1900 was not always a pleasure; the many entries complaining of uncomfortable and filthy quarters tell their own story, and finally did show on the health of the brothers.

Even in the close confines of his diary, its writer remained a soft-spoken gentleman, hardly ever complaining on account of adverse circumstances. He carried the burden of his famous brother's artistic enterprises, and after 'serious painting'—as he described the drudgery of painting backgrounds and decorative props in his brother's portrait commissions—he was in search of



artistic expression in his own landscape painting. How deeply he was engrossed in this work becomes evident from some of the entries, where he described the successive reworking of paintings to capture the atmosphere of the landscape.

In 1892, Ravi Varma decided to send a consignment of ten pictures titled 'The life of native peoples' to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The themes of the ten paintings were women dressed in their traditional attire. A pamphlet accompanying the paintings stated:

> ...Mr Ravi Varma draws pictures which contain Hindu Religious Scenes and History. His paintings are excellent and blessed with a wealth of imagination. So his pictures which are exhibited before the people of America reveal the beauty of Indian women and their way of costumes and adornment...

Further, the individual themes of the pictures were explained to the American audience:

1) 'Malabar beauty'—a beautiful lady in Travancore revels in playing her Veena. Her long splendid hair is done in the traditional Keralite style adorned with flower-garlands. Her dress is very beautiful.

2) 'There comes the father'—A Keralite mother clad in white cloth is preparing to go to the temple with her son at her arm. A dog is following. She can start as soon as her husband comes. Looking at the child (she speaks) 'there comes the father' (Plates 16, 17).

3) 'A Muslim lady in the bath'—Two servant women taking off the dress of a young Muslim noble-lady to give her a bath. A third servant prepares a hooka for the lady to have a last puff before she immerses herself in the pool made of white stone. The background of the picture is as seen in the luxurious palaces of Moghul emperors in Delhi and Agra.

4) 'Bride being led to the marriage pandal'—A Parsi lady is made to stand on a platform to be dressed up by her mother and sister to be led to the marriage pandal.

5) 'Kuravas in Southern India'—A model of a tribe whose profession is to wander from house to house telling fortune. Mostly young village girls ask for their fortune.

6) 'Remembering the Sister'—A scene that reminds one of the love towards the sister in a Mahratta Hindu family. Behind her can be seen Vigneshwar (Ganesh) who wards off misfortune.

7) 'Near the Well'—A Brahmin girl in Madras is standing exhausted beside the well after drawing water from there. However her mother-in-law does not stop scolding her (as a good-for-nothing girl).

8) 'Lady singer in Bombay'—A female singer who sings with an expression of love in her face looking at the listeners. A sitar is beside her on the floor. There is a tray full of betel leaves and areca nuts which are essential things to display hospitality in Hindu life during marriage or any other festival as are also dancing and singing.

   On such occasions she is the center of attraction.

9) 'Hope'—A Muslim woman dressed in Hindu style, she can be seen anywhere in India. Her only hope is to have darshan of her lover again.

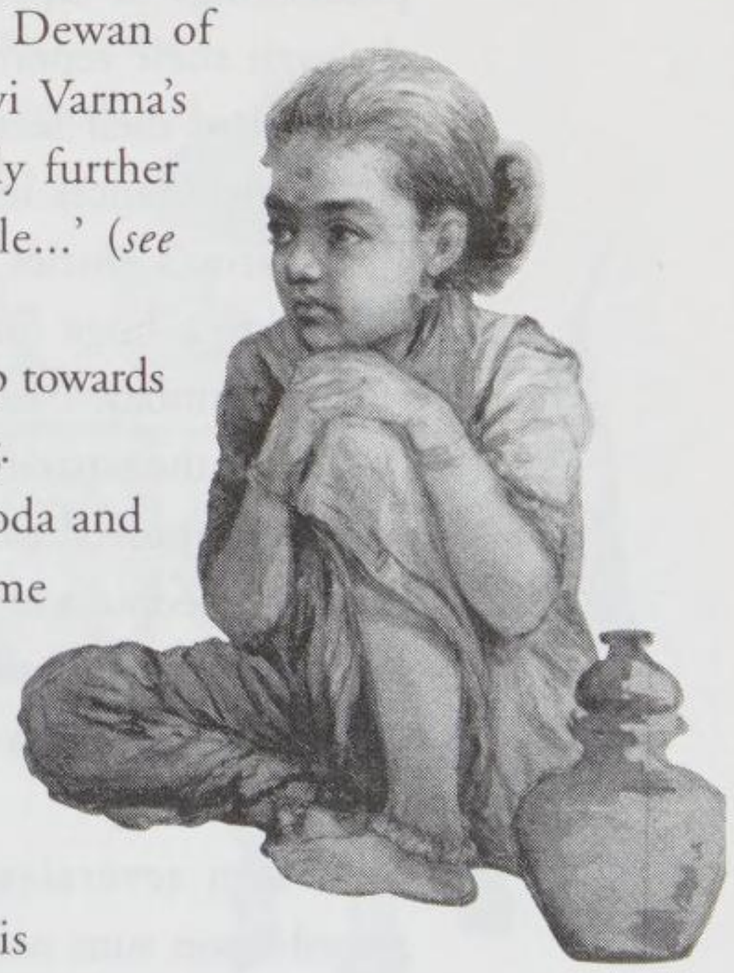
10) 'The disappointing news'—A woman belonging to the Ayyamkar caste in Madras. The picture talks about a disappointing letter she receives (Nayar, N.B., 1953: 125–6).

Ravi Varma's paintings were rewarded with two gold medals. This news was received enthusiastically in India. But a close look at the wording of the diploma will reveal the finer connotations of the prize. Ravi Varma's paintings were not exhibited in the general section for art, but in the section for ethnography. Admired not so much as extraordinary paintings, but rather as ethnographic specimens '...of much ethnological value...', they give careful attention to the detail of costume and articles used in social and ceremonial life. These paintings 'give a good idea of the progress of instruction in Art', as the diplomas revealingly state (World's Columbian Exposition 1893) (*see also* Chronology 1893). The diplomas congratulate the British administration for the successful instruction of natives at least as much as it honours the artist personally, which is rather strange, since Ravi Varma had no academic instruction in art.

In recalling Ravi Varma's successful participation in the Columbian Exposition in 1893, what is generally overlooked is that several other Indian artists participating there met with similar success. The photographer Raja Deen Dayal, who covered with his camera so many tours of visiting European aristocrats, also won a gold medal, as did more than three-fourths of the participating persons and firms from all over the world. In the official catalogue of the art section, none of the Indian participants was even so much as mentioned. Indeed the Columbian Exposition was an entertainment extravaganza, where the burlesque eroticism of the belly dancer Fahreda Mahzar, known as Little Egypt, who threw her hips into the faces of the (male) spectators, was surely more spoken of than so many holy men from India, and elsewhere in the 'Parliament of Religions', where, at the same time, the Hindu monk Vivekananda held forth, as did Angarika Dharmapala of Ceylon for the Buddhist creed.

Ravi Varma's successful participation in this international forum cemented his fame in the whole of India. He was hailed as the first Indian artist who faced international competition and came out a resounding success. Medals and diplomas were taken as proof of this.

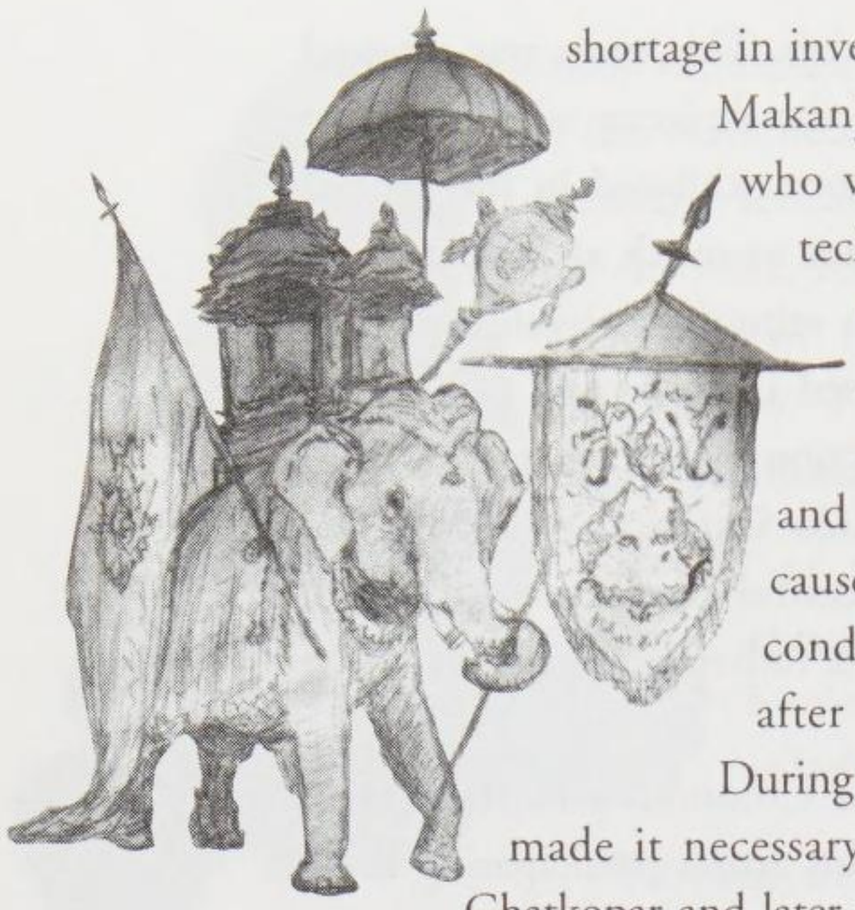
In 1893, Ravi Varma invested a large part of the remuneration from his first Baroda commission into the establishment of his Fine Arts Lithographic Press, with the intention of producing high quality prints of his own mythological paintings. Already, ten years earlier, Ravi Varma's mentor, Sir T. Madhava Rao (Plate 1C), Dewan of Travancore and later of Baroda, had initiated the idea of having Ravi Varma's pictures lithographed. He saw in this a national project to '...not only further his [Ravi Varma's] own fame, but as a service to the Indian people...' (*see* Chronology 1884)



For Madhava Rao, the broadcasting of Indian mythology was a step towards the self-realization of the Indian people on their way to nation building.

Ravi Varma earned a large sum of money for his paintings in Baroda and other princely states, he also had grand spending habits. This became particularly true in his later days. Part of the remuneration from Baroda went into refurbishing the family temple and 'the palace' back in Kilimanur.

When Ravi Varma established his Press he was not only in search of a business partner, but also a person who could make up for his



shortage in investment capital. He found a partner in Govardhan Das Khatau Makanji, an industrialist from a famous Bombay cotton dynasty, who would also look after the financial affairs of the Press. The technical side of the enterprise was to be supervised by several German technicians, chief of whom was Fritz Schleicher. The Press began production in 1894, and right from the beginning ran into trouble. The endemic occurrence of plague in Bombay and the nationalistic agitation against the British administration caused strife and unrest among the native workers. The insecure conditions hampered industry and trade in Bombay, particularly after 1896.

During long periods, the Press would lie idle. These adverse conditions made it necessary to shift the Press workshop from downtown Girgaum to Ghatkopar and later to Malavli-Lonavla, high up in the Western Ghauts on the way to Poona. Strangely, the diary hardly ever mentions all these external difficulties. And when it does, the entries are quite matter-of-fact, considering that the daily death toll in the city of Bombay was at times a staggering 262 (Diary 30 January 1901).

During the long absences of the brothers from Bombay, the supervision of the Press rested with Govardhan Das and seemed to have been grossly inadequate. This became clear when Raja Varma revised the accounts books prior to the separation from their partner in 1898. The revision brought to light a discrepancy between the number of prints in stock and prints accounted for in the books (Diary 19 July 1898). It seems that the print runs were much higher than accounted for, and the surplus sold off clandestinely. The diary does not so much as hint at who might have been responsible for this incongruity, but it becomes clear that this was one of the causes of the financial failure of the Press, which finally caused the split between Ravi Varma and his partner Govardhan Das. Finally Ravi Varma bought the shares from his former partner for Rs 22,000 (Diary 16 June 1898).

Besides the entries in the diary of that period, there is no documentary evidence available on the financial position of the Press. The diary records the painfully long proceedings of separation of the partnership, in which advocates for both sides played through their repertoire of tricks, causing malignant delays, most probably raising the prospect of their fees. When the deal was struck, money had to be borrowed from friends and acquaintances in Bombay. During these long and painful days of managing the Press, Raja Varma's entries are those of a soul in torment, homesick and lonely, responsible for managing a huge fortune. After the deed of separation was signed, he fled from plague-ridden Bombay, back to his native Travancore.

After the separation from Govardhan Das, the overall functioning of the Press seems not to have improved much. The supervision of the Press' working remained in the hands of the same people who had caused irregularities before. It was only a few years later that the Varma brothers let the press to Shriram Pant and Fritz Schleicher, including the permission to reproduce about a hundred of Ravi Varma's paintings for a considerable sum, on monthly installments.

From several entries in the diary, it becomes clear that neither the initially agreed upon sum nor the monthly installments arrived regularly, and it seems that at times

the relation between Ravi Varma and the new proprietors of the Press soured on that account. Still, Ravi Varma regularly supplied new pictures, which were printed and distributed.

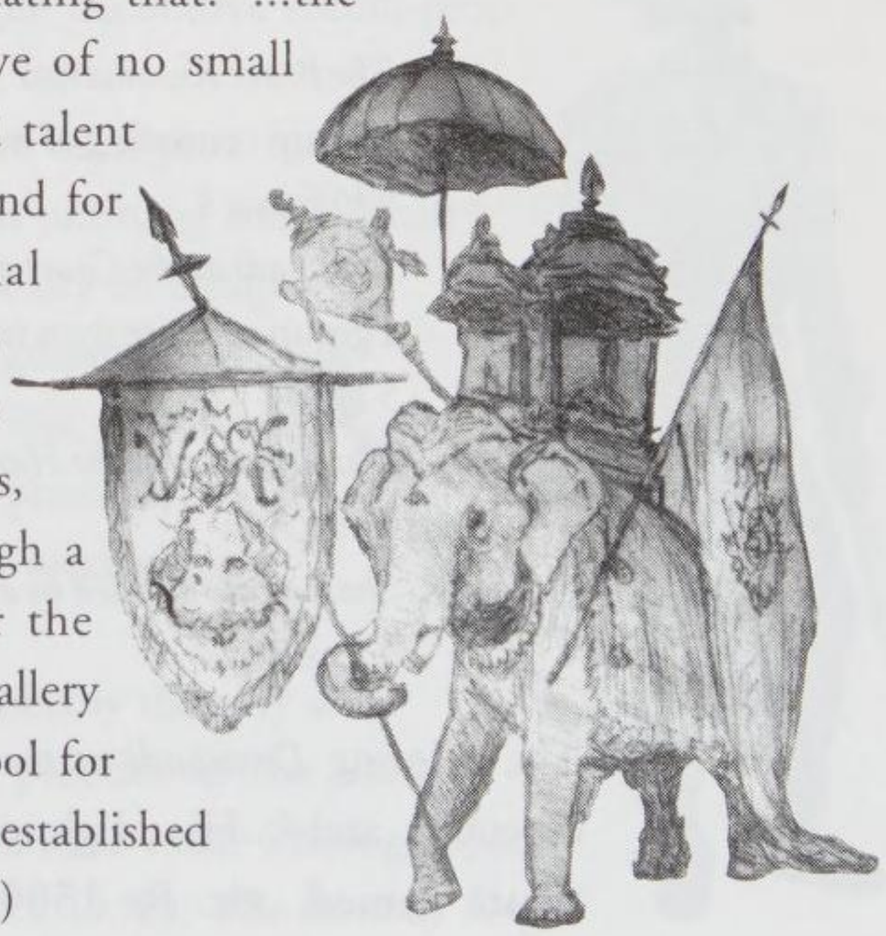
Already, during the lifetime of Ravi Varma, the number of prints churned out from the Press ran into several lakhs. Print orders for postcards mentioned in the diary were to the tune of several hundred thousand. The ever-escalating number of product advertisements and an increase in pre-packed merchandise like tobacco, matchboxes, and liqueurs gave a huge boost to the printing of colourful labels and posters. The Ravi Varma Press, under the management of Fritz Schleicher, had the right to put the best-known visuals available in India—the pictures of Ravi Varma—to work.

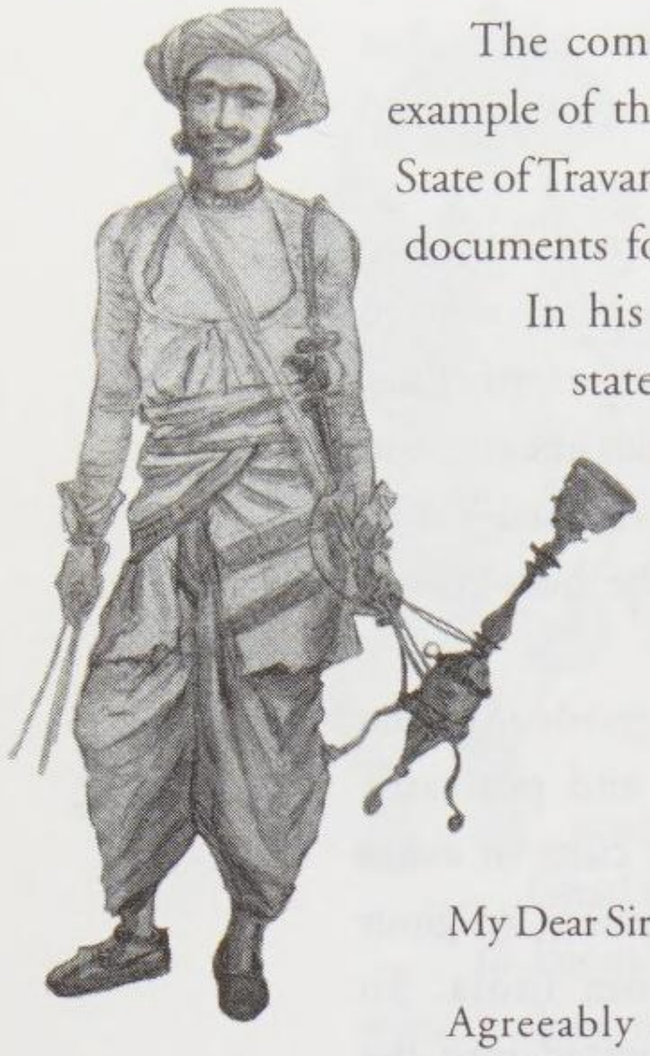
The importance of these prints as visuals distributed on consumer goods in India in the form of labels, trademark signs, advertisements, display prints and postcards (Diary 14 January 1899) is quite obvious; it also influenced non-Indian cults in other parts of the world, particularly in Africa and the West Indies, where indigenous religious beliefs came into close contact with that of Hindu immigrants from India. So were several of the Indian gods in the rendering of Ravi Varma incorporated into the Voodoo pantheon.

It is impossible to gather, from the entries of the diary, a true picture of the profits or losses of the Press. It is likely that Ravi Varma finally terminated the ownership of the press without overall loss or even with slight profits. It also becomes quite clear that a more stringent business policy and a better supervision of the Press might have made Ravi Varma one of the richest men in India.

Besides the industrial enterprise of the Press, Ravi Varma had a flourishing portraiture practice. These commissions demanded long journeys, which form the background to some of the most interesting parts of the diary, with intimate observations from far-off princely courts in Rajasthan and other places. The diary also gives detailed lists of the persons painted by the brothers as well as the financial details of these commissions.

Not mentioned in the diary, but well documented from other sources, is the pivotal role Ravi Varma played in the cultural set-up of the State of Travancore. He strongly advocated the establishment of a public picture gallery, stating that: '...the establishment of a picture gallery in the capital will prove of no small advantage to the Art by stimulating and encouraging local talent and placing before beginners proper models for guidance...and for the general public...a permanent source of educational enjoyment' (Trivandrum 1896, Letter, Shungrasoobyar to Govt; Archives, 1995: 180–2; *see* Chronology 1896). The proposal was taken up by the state and, for the next five years, Ravi Varma supplied them with several paintings. Although a considerable sum was reserved in the annual budget for the acquisition of paintings, the proposed building for the art gallery did not come forth. The paintings were housed in the School for Arts and Industries in Trivandrum. (A proper art gallery was established in Trivandrum only in 1941, long after Ravi Varma's death.)





The communication between the artist and the government on that account is an example of the self-consciousness and competence with which Ravi Varma dealt with the State of Travancore. These communications between the court and the artist are also important documents for the pricing of his canvases, their framing, and their transport.

In his very first letter to the Dewan, Ravi Verma gives several programmatic statements which give an idea of how the artist saw his own art and his artistic mission:

Kilimanur 26th November 1896
(To) Messrs R.Ry
S. Shungresoobyer F.M.U.
Dewan
Trivandrum

My Dear Sir

Agreeably to our conversation of the other day I have the pleasure to place before you four subjects for painting as a beginning for the proposed Picture Gallery at Trivandrum.

I think we cannot do better than begin with classical subjects as they appear to the feelings and understanding of the Hindu Mythology as offering a wide field for the exercise of their talents. It is therefore nothing but just that a Hindu Government like that of His Highness our enlightened Maharaja should extend its patronage to me, a native of the soil, before I am too old to work. My late uncle's Diksha, which I am performing, has doomed me to spend the next twelve months at home. I hope therefore to be able to finish the four paintings of which a list is herein enclosed in the course of the year. Should I get at an early date the sanction of the Government to take the work in hand. My charges are according to the difficulty of treatment of the subjects, the number of figures they contain and the sizes of the canvases. Hoping the matter will not fail to receive your earliest attention

I beg to remain

My dear Sir
your most obedient
Ravi Varma

1) *The Brave Kusumavati*
a group consisting of more than ten figures
5 ½ feet x 4. Rs 1500/-
2) *Draupadi at the Court of Virata*
a group of more than ten figures
5 ½ x 4 Rs 1500/-
3) *Damayanti and the Hamsa* or Swan
4 ½ x 3 ½ Rs 1000/-
4) *Shakuntala assailed by a Wasp calls the King to help her*
4 ½ x 3 ½ Rs 1000/-

The painting *Draupadi at the Court of Virata* was chosen as the first of the paintings to be executed, and '...His Highness the Maharaja has been pleased to accord sanction...at the figure named...viz. Rs 1500, and...to exhibit the pictures to the public'. Ravi Varma

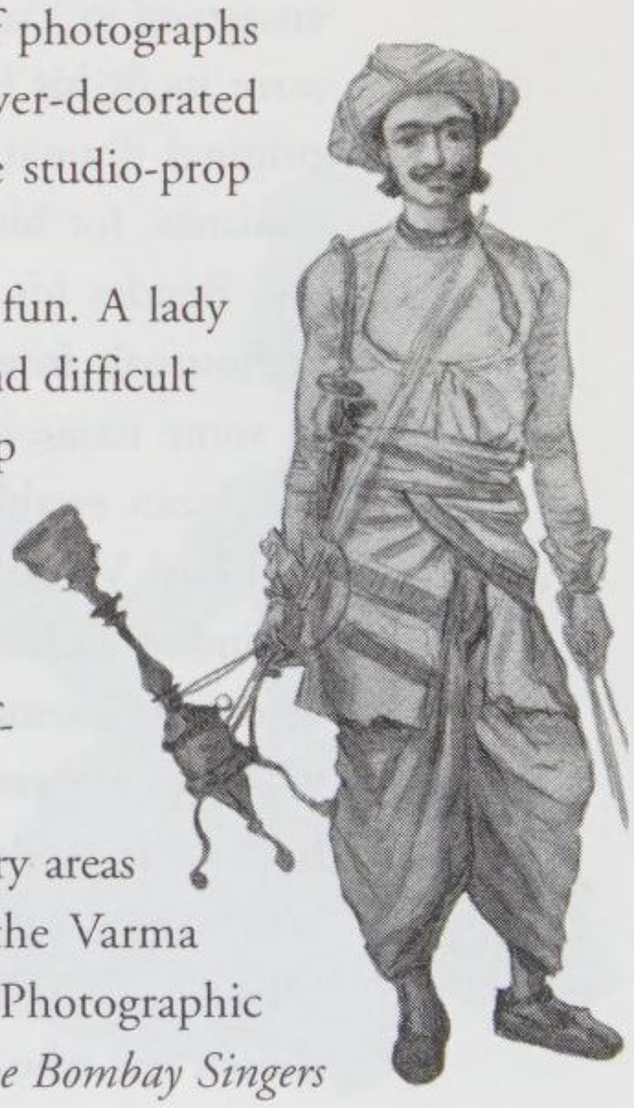
delivered it almost one year later and charged Rs 1650, the excess of Rs 150 explained as the cost of the elaborate gilt frame and the railway charges. After some flutter in the financial administration on account of this rise of cost, the money was sanctioned within one month and the future layout for the proposed art gallery enlarged to include the frames for the pictures as well.

The diary, although giving important hints as to the cause of the financial fiasco of the press, hardly gives a glimpse of the technical processes involved in the production of the prints. Machinery and equipment are only mentioned once *en passant* when one entry refers to the breakdown of a machine. Hence, it is altogether difficult to understand this hiatus.

The processes involved in producing an oleograph print from the initial painting, to the preparation of the master stone, and the artful blending and overlapping of the individual colours in the successive print runs surely must have had its anxious moments. Those moments when the artist eagerly awaited the final proofs, to compare the colour schemes of the print with the tints he originally had envisaged, could not have been without interest to an artist of the standing of Raja Varma.

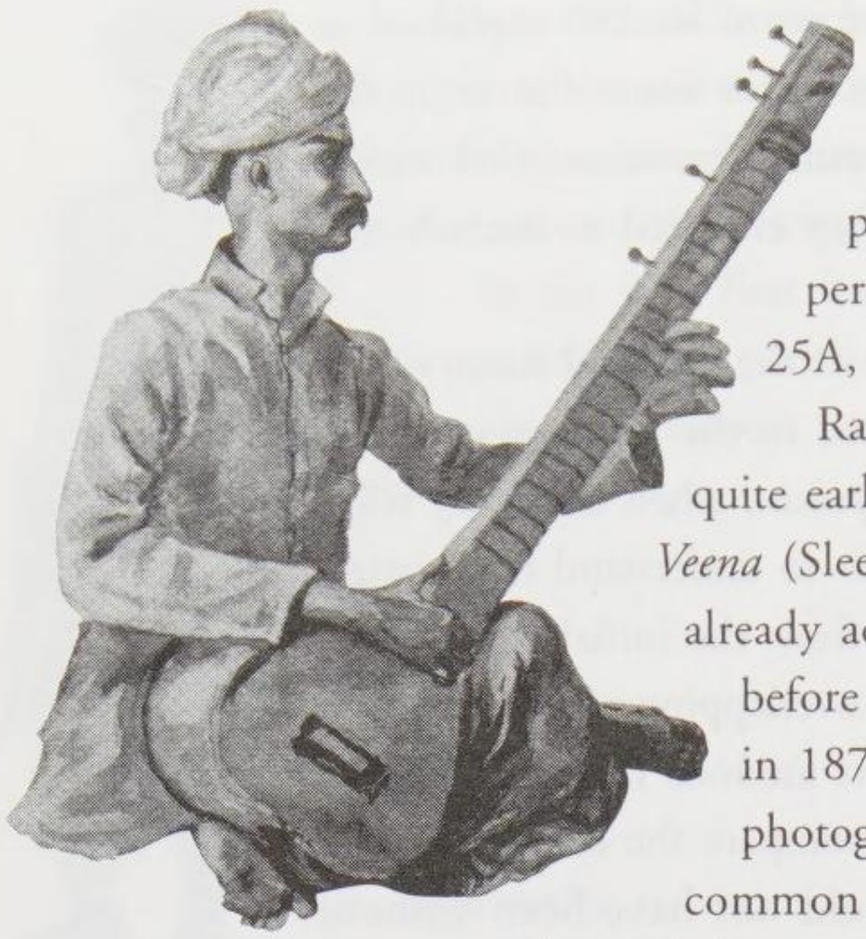
The printing of high-quality pictures at that time was still an art which demanded a highly skilled mastery and empirical knowledge of colour application and colour schemes. But in the diary these processes and their application are almost never mentioned and, if at all, are extremely brief and always indirect.

Some diary entries tell of the use of photography as preliminary to portrait commissions. The rediscovery of the family albums in the Kilimanur library brought to light a good number of photographs which were rendered in oil as preliminary studies, or as portraits. Indeed, these photographs indicate that almost all portraits were done after such photographs. But photographs were not only used as preliminaries for portraits but also as studies and poses for mythological and other themes to be painted. Although Raja Varma writes extensively on subtle artistic problems in his landscape paintings, he hardly ever mentions details from the portrait practice, except in a few cases when the sitter demanded a particularly unfitting or difficult-to-paint outfit. A number of photographs show just this: there is a photograph of a Maharaja in all his rather over-decorated European finery, leaning painfully and heavily against a fragile decorative studio-prop table—alas—without boots.



The work of painting during sittings might also not have been pure fun. A lady sitter demanded to wear an extraordinarily rich saree which was unfitting and difficult to paint, other persons had heavy features, colours would not dry in damp climate, and disease was a constant companion on their assignments. At Hyderabad, they were confronted with corrupt court officials. At one point Ravi Varma found it 'distasteful' to paint portraits after photographs and passed these commissions to his brother, in one case even to an out-of-work Bombay artist (Diary 11 July 1901).

The artistic areas on which the diary remains silent are probably the very areas where the confessed artistic ethos clashed with the artistic practice of the Varma brothers. For nearly all the famous portraits, photographic models exist. Photographic studies were found for *Mohini* (Lady on a swing) (Plate 19B, C, D, E), *The Bombay Singers*



(Plate 27) and *There comes Papa*, for which a whole series of photographic versions exist (Plate 16).

Particularly numerous are photographs of musicians. The painting *Malabar Beauty*—a Lady playing the Sarabat—is a perfect rendering into oil of a photographic portrait (Plate 24B; 25A, B).

Ravi Varma must have started working from photographic models quite early; such studies exist for the painting *A Nair Lady playing the Veena* (Sleeping Malabar Beauty) (Plate 26A, B), and this picture was already admired by the Duke of Avondale (later the Prince of Wales before he became King Edward VII) during his visit to Travancore in 1874 (Rees, J.D., 1891: 148). It is also possible that this model photograph was used for a later rendering of the same subject; it was common for Ravi Varma to prepare copies of his own paintings if demanded.

Painting from photographs was a common practice with painters of that period. The English painter Frank Brooks modelled his picture *Lady with a Fan* from a photograph for which Rajibai stood as a model (Plate 18A, B). This painting was obviously commissioned by Ravi Varma himself, most probably to become acquainted with the working methods of a European painter.

For Ravi Varma, who had no academic training and could not rely on models for nude studies, photography was the only practicable method to compose scenes with human figures. Not only did he work from photographs modelled according to his own directions, but also exploited stills from theatre productions which were sold by theatre troupes. Here, the artist took the setting of the decoration and the pathos of the actor/actress to fit his own theme. A good study in case is the painting *Damayanti* (Plates 20, 21), which is fashioned after one photograph from a set of pictures titled 'The Feast of Roses', featuring an actress in 'classical' European attire. Ravi Varma changed her classical robe to an Indian saree to fit his heroine Damayanti. He not only retained the mood of longing from the original dramatic setting, but also the stage paraphernalia, like decorative pillars and banisters, for his own dramatic setting of the scene.

Besides his own collection of photographs, Ravi Varma used a hoard of illustrated art journals from England, Germany, and France. In these journals, virtually every artist of some name is represented, so that Ravi Varma was well informed on the art of the European establishment.

Ravi Varma was more secure drawing draped figures rather than nudes. The difficulty in finding models posing in the nude is mentioned in one of the entries from Hyderabad, where the Varma brothers contacted some street girls to pose for the painting *At the Bath* which they were painting at that time (Diary 15 February 1902). That they finally did find some model is quite clear from some of the photographs found in his collection, which show a young girl in rather lascivious poses looking uneasily into the camera's lens (Plate 38A). The painting *At the Bath*—never displayed publicly—was hailed, by the chosen few who ever saw it, as a masterpiece (Plate 37D) and a compliment to the beauty

and chastity of the womanhood of Malabar, although one early biographer had commented that the female character does not possess 'the innocent purity of the unsipped blossom' (Pillai, S. A.,1928: 28). Still, some romantic legends are woven around this work, whose background the Diary unveils so unromantically.

Raja Varma mentions another—rather sly—method of drawing nudes: boating close to bathing ghauts, where 'the women who walk along the street so closely veiled strip themselves almost naked and indulge in bathing or washing without any sign of modesty' (Diary 21 June 1901).

The Varma brothers had in their library several model books depicting nude women, men, and children in different poses and groupings (Plate 33A, B, D). These books of 'classical poses' with titles like *Le Nu Esthétique* and *Der Künstlerische Akt*, were widely advertised as artists' substitutes for models posing in the nude and also doubled as easily acquirable—although not cheap—erotic magazines at that time in Europe. That Ravi Varma used these model books is clear from one sheet which is imprinted with the Ravi Varma Press seal and dated 1895 (Plate 33C).

These model books came in handy for commercial works in the press. Figures could be traced out on transparent paper and assembled into compositions, since the individual figures all through the books were kept in natural-size relations. All the artist had to do was to drape the figures with the clothes and paraphernalia that the composition demanded. These assembled groups of figures had a drawback, however; foreshortenings were incorrect and the figures looked frozen, and at times unnaturally twisted and constructed. Indeed, almost all attempts at 'realistic' painting by Indian artists at that time suffered from such faults, and Ravi Varma's paintings were no exception. Particularly in compositions for oleographic prints, figural compositions looked like assemblages of cut-outs, which they actually are (Plate 33A, B etc.). In the library of Kilimanur, a number of tracings on transparent paper were still found tucked away in books from where the models were copied out (Plate 8B). The pictorial imagery, then, which went into the new formulation of Indian mythology, is a patchwork of archetypal pathos, sensuality, and modes deriving from the European classic, rolled, abraded, remoulded, and reinterpreted for different uses and occasions.

The Varma brothers worked consciously towards mass appeal, which becomes clear from those entries in the diary which describe how they paid a visit to the store of Anand Shivajee Desai—who was also the distributor for prints from the Ravi Varma Press—to inform themselves about the best-selling German prints (Diary 21 June 1898). Unfortunately, the diary does not explain the nature of these German prints. But 'German Prints' at that time stood for cheap and kitsch oleographs of questionable taste, in most cases depictions of scantily-dressed women in lascivious poses (Plates 32; 36A). It is ironic that prints of scantily dressed European women should be the first to fall into the initial drive of Swadeshi, replaced by prints of Mohinis and Sundaris, who were also temptresses, but in Indian garb, and just as scantily dressed. (Plates 33A, B; 37B, C; 46A, B, C; 47A, C, D; etc.)

The Ravi Varma Press did issue quite a number of such prints (Plates 33A,B; 34; etc.), and some of them can be shown to be instigated by English pin-up prints, as for example the print 'Vasant' (Plate 47D), a young girl lasciviously leaning against a flowering tree, the wind playing with her semi-transparent attire, rendering it transparent over her bosom and other areas where painters and their clientele liked it.

The diary discloses little about the marriage of the Varma brothers. This aloofness from the intimate family circle might be an expression of the traditional position of men in matrilinear aristocratic families, where they remained outsiders from the lineage to which their wife and children belonged. This of course does not suggest indifference between wife and husband or between father and children; still, there seems to have been a rising uneasiness and insecurity among men in these matrilinear groups of Kerala, during times of massive erosion of traditional values. Male members were spiritual functionaries in their own lineages and guardians of their sisters' offspring. This often led to the clash of interests between the head of a lineage, the Koil Thampuran—brother of the Senior Rani—on one side and her husband (generally a cross-cousin) who belonged to another lineage. The long absences of the brothers from their women should be seen in this light.

The matrilinear values in the aristocratic society of Kerala were considered a travesty of social noxrms as compared to the social norms of the patriarchal Kshatriya/Brahmin-dominated middle-class society in which the Varma brothers functioned, socially and professionally, during their stay outside of their Travancore homeland.

Raja Varma was married to a Nair lady from Mavelikara. The diary does not say anything about his married life; only one of the entries hints at the sadness of the long parting between him and his wife Janaki. It is said that, on his deathbed, he regretted not having provided better for her (Nayar, N.B., 1953: 116). Their marriage remained without children.

Ravi Varma—as the eldest son—was married to the house of Mavelikara, a lineage at par in status with Kilimanur and one of the three lineages from which the house of Travancore took consorts. Ravi Varma's wife Bhagirathi (Plate 2C; 4C; 5C)—known as Pooruruttati Nal Thampuratty, according to her asterism—was the younger sister of Rani Lakshmibai, adopted Senior Rani of Travancore and (childless) wife of Kerala Varma.

This closeness to the Travancore court also entwined Ravi Varma into its intrigues, one of which kept him away from Trivandrum for a year, when he was declared persona non grata. He spent that period at his wife's court, distancing himself geographically from Trivandrum.

Ravi Varma and his wife had two sons and three daughters. One biographer commented that the marriage was 'an eventless affair' which, after all, might not have been so, since he lived a considerable period at his wife's place in Mavelikara, where he even had a studio built (Plates 52C, 53A).

Rarely does the diary deal with persons of the writer's own lineage. His elder brother Gode Varma is mentioned just once or twice, his sister Mangalabai Thampuratty—herself

a remarkable painter—just once. Relatives are mentioned mostly in case of their deaths. It is therefore quite surprising when Raja Varma expresses an opinion questioning the moral standing of Kerala Varma (Diary 19 June 1903). This is particularly surprising since, only a few weeks earlier (Diary 27 May 1903), he had mentioned how fond the girls—the granddaughters of Ravi Varma, adopted into the royal household of Travancore—were of their guardian, the 'Grandfather', as Kerala Varma was addressed by them.

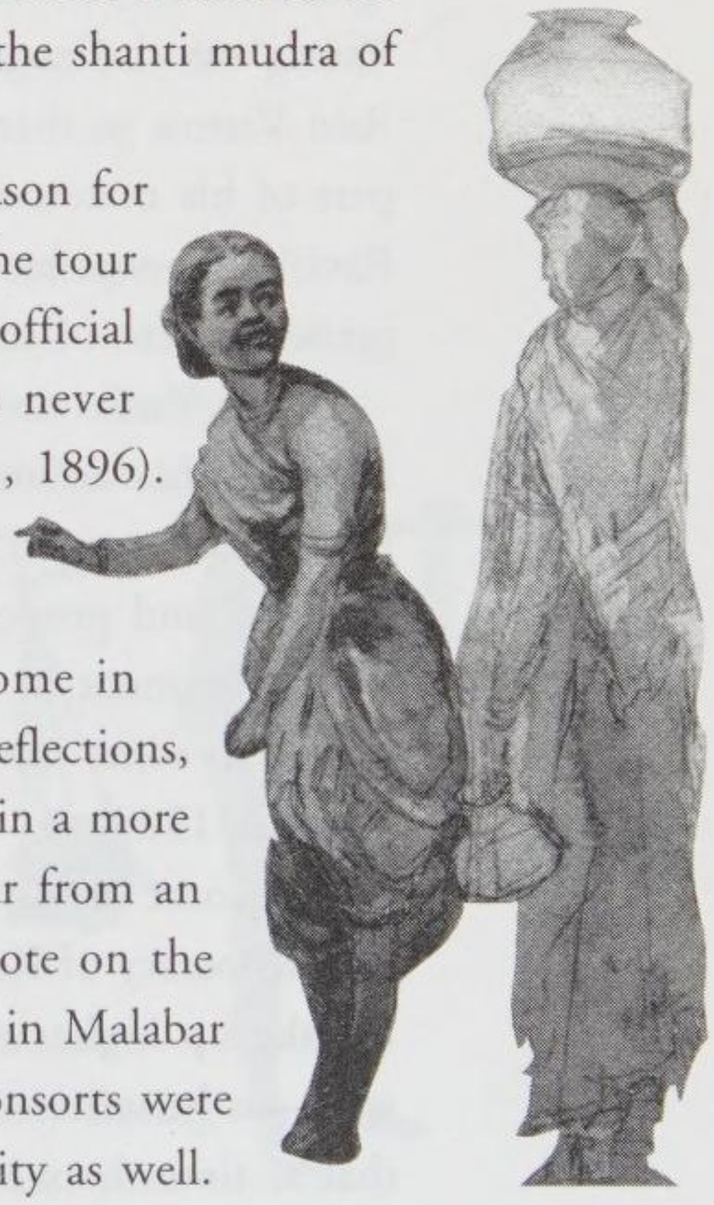
Indeed, the purpose of the diary is not always clear, nor does it seem probable that there was a single purpose all through. At times, the entries are reduced to pure accounts of events without much explanation, while at other times, they could easily form parts of a biography of the writer, with reflections on landscapes, birds, festivities, etc. This is particularly true for the later entries, when he chronicles festivals, meetings of relatives, and explains the tightly knit family ties, which are rather difficult to unravel even for the initiated. For the stranger, it is a jungle consisting of too many similar-sounding names, all with the same title—Varma—distinguished at the most by an annexed asterism. The prevalent system of cross-cousin marriages, with the frequent adoption of females to keep the lineage going, does not make matters any the easier, particularly when, for example, girls of the tender age of three or four years are addressed as senior and junior Ranis.

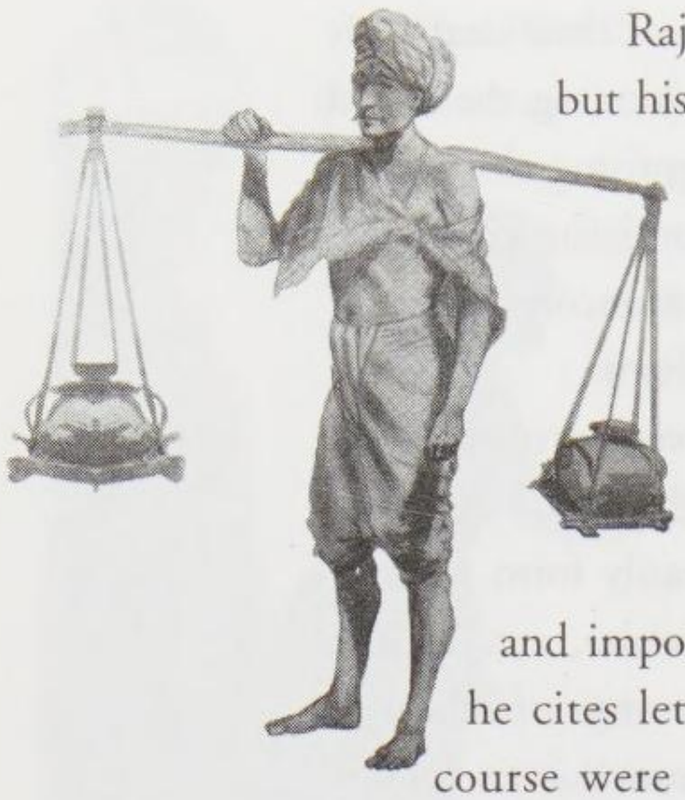
However, some of the later parts of the Diary make interesting reading, describing the remodelling of the palace and temple in Kilimanur. Some of these stories, or details from it, have become local legends, still narrated today in Kilimanur. The name of Ravi Varma's elephant—Govind—is still widely known.

As family lore has it, Ravi Varma was fond of elephants, the ultimate status symbol of aristocracy. One of these legends recounts an episode when one of the elephants, in a rage, was trampling through fields and labourers' quarters. It was Ravi Varma who pacified him—and here the tale varies—by feeding him a bunch of bananas through a wrought-iron window, so that the mahout could climb the animal and direct it back to the stable. Another version holds that Ravi Varma pacified the rogue by the shanti mudra of his hand.

We have already remarked that there seems to be no single reason for writing the diary, which presumably began as a travelogue during the tour with Prince Martanda Varma in 1894–5. Raja Varma was then the official chronicler of the Prince. Although the narration of the tour was never published, a manuscript was ready for print in 1896 (Varma, C.R.R., 1896).

It seems that, later, Raja Varma just kept up the habit of writing a travel diary, which of course leaves out the periods of his stay in Kerala. It was only in 1903 that he wrote some entries at his home in Kilimanur. From then on, many of the entries are recollections and reflections, which might have been written with the intention of being used later in a more literary work. That he had ambitions in that direction becomes clear from an ethnographic article he authored in a ladies' magazine, where he wrote on the Namboodris, a Brahmin caste which also held much landed property in Malabar (Varma, C.R.R., 1903: 77–8). Indeed, it was from this caste that consorts were taken into his own lineage, and his father belonged to that community as well.





Raja Varma seems to have been very much aware of his own artistic abilities, but his own reflections on this are invariably kept on a technical level. Also, he would never boast of his prizes and gold medals, which he regularly won during the annual exhibitions in Madras and elsewhere. In the art market of the day, his paintings did not command a price worth mentioning. All he received for two paintings was Rs 108 (Diary 23 March 1899), when, at the same time, paintings which were to a large extent done by him but signed with the fluid signature of Ravi Varma easily fetched twenty times more. He was aware of his brother's qualities and importance, without ever boasting about it. It is only in some instances that he cites letters of comment or thanks by highly ranked personalities, which of course were valuable recommendations, at times reprinted in small and sketchy biographies brought out in some of the early Indian national papers, often with illustrations. It is quite remarkable that these magazines or periodicals contained a number of persons who were also in contact with the Varma brothers: Indian high court judges, Indian ICS officers—a number of them from the first batch of native Indians recruited for this highest service of civil administration—as well as Indian politicians and native princes.

It seems that Ravi Varma himself did, at times, function as a diplomat without a portfolio, on the strength of his acquaintances and the nature of his personality. Moreover, it is quite interesting that, in one of the illustrated magazines also appear a number of persons from Travancore, and quite a number of them have been painted by Ravi Varma, such as Kerala Varma with his wife, the Senior Rani. Also, Ravi Varma's granddaughters—adopted into the royal house as Ranis of Attingale—feature in this magazine (*Album of Men and Women in India*, 1906: 82–4).

In some of the later entries, Raja Varma writes more self-consciously about his and his brother's position in the aristocratic hierarchy of Kerala. It was the time when Ravi Varma was challenged for his use of the title 'Raja' with which he was invariably addressed. Ravi Varma, at that time, claimed that it was usage in the maternal tradition to adopt a part of his maternal uncle's name, which was Raja Raja Varma (Plate 1D). In any case, Ravi Varma was by then too famous for such criticism even to scratch him; these were the prickly thorns of callousness and envy, which came along with fame.

Ravi Varma at that time acted as a self-conscious feudal aristocrat, having become the head of his clan and innovatively managing the joint property of Kilimanur. There, he introduced pepper cultivation, and seriously started to reclaim the almost forgotten property and property rights in northern Kerala. He did not even hesitate to challenge the government in court over the use of large tracts of forests, and even acted as power broker in some inheritance dispute for—not too small—monetary considerations (Diary 30 June 1903).

In some of his diary entries, Raja Varma airs some rather democratic ideas; he advises the aristocracy of Kerala, particularly his own brand of Thampurans and Koil Thampurans, to take up higher education, work in service and take on professions, like the 'Sudras' who—as he writes—go forward in society (Diary 25 August 1902). Still, one also observes that at times he wears this democratism as just an attitude, as when he comments in one

entry from Kerala: 'We are all Rajas here' (Diary 12 January 1903). He is also critical of obscurantism, and blames one of his relatives of excessive purity. What caused him to enter into the Diary the questioning of Kerala Varma's moral standing, which was brought up by no less than the Dewan, is quite puzzling, however. It might have been Kerala Varma's dread of pollution, his overdoing of sacral purity by constantly subjugating himself to purifying baths, or 'hardly being out of water' as Raja Varma describes it quite appropriately. The entry might have something to do with Kerala Varma's criticism of Ravi Varma's appropriation of the title 'Raja', yet it seems quite brazen to question the morals of a person of Kerala Varma's standing, who held a position in literature comparable to that of Ravi Varma's in painting.

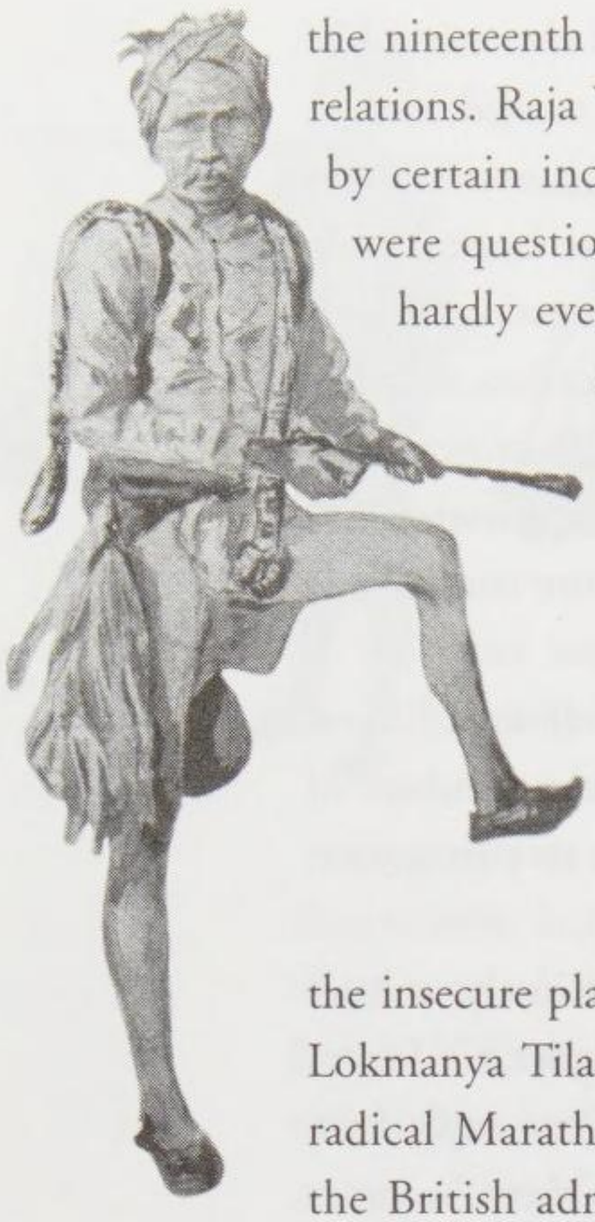
In the entries during the Bombay days, Raja Varma projects himself as a liberal bourgeois, who enjoyed communication with simple folks as much as with members of the upper crust. He used to sing with the people in Bhaji village and went to pan-suparis (*see* p. 208, Note 67) of the emerging national political caste.

The Varma brothers were wanderers between worlds. They participated in the culture of the highly anglicized bourgeoisie of Bombay, as well as the feudal aristocratic life of native princes. They became friendly with American actors, sea captains, Parsi capitalists, and nautch-girls at feudal courts. That they were open to learning from all of them becomes clear from the diary.

The following episode is described in one of the most enlightening entries about the Varma brothers' life as communicators between cultural archipelagos. Ravi Varma once asked a lady photographer from Italy, who practised in a zenana studio in Hyderabad—a photo studio where women from the harem, otherwise requiring to be veiled, could have their photographs taken—to pose for him dressed as an Egyptian. This is the ultimate travesty of Orientalism by a painter from the southernmost tip of India who locates the Orient towards the West. The Oriental, for once, is not the subject but the creator. Choosing a model from Europe may have then seemed like a world gone topsy-turvy, but the 'global village' is nothing but a new term for a condition that has existed for a long time in the world of art.

Ravi Varma picked up a good many genres from Europe without caring much about the original cultural connotation of such pictures. One of these is reflected in the painting *The Miser*. The model for this had to be an old Jew, and the gentleman who finally posed for the painting is described in a nonchalantly racist manner as a 'fine old Jew' with a 'crooked nose'. The contempt for the sitter is further expressed by mentioning the amount of money paid to him, which is only mentioned on one other occasion, when some street girls were contacted to pose for them before the camera.

The Diary does not give any direct hint of the writer's political affiliations, although the Varma brothers mention their participation during the Congress meet in Madras and were familiar with many of the leading Congress personalities of their times. Not a single entry comments clearly on any one of the many problems faced by the people of Bombay during that time. The plague was the foremost problem of the city during the last years of



the nineteenth century, and the fight against it became the touchstone of Indian– British relations. Raja Varma deals with the plague situation only insofar as he himself is bothered by certain inconveniences on account of the quarantine precautions, which, of course, were questionable. At quarantine check posts, first-class passengers in the train were hardly ever asked from where they came, while third-class passengers were harassed. Still the diary does not comment even once on the British quarantine policy, nor on Tilak's opposition to it.

Raja Varma also never mentions labour problems; the entries do not even touch such questions as the salary of the labourers, although all these problems were crucial to the economic situation of the Ravi Varma Press.

The location of the Press was shifted several times from downtown Girgaum to the outskirts of Ghatkopar, and finally to Malavli still higher up in the mountains. All these burdensome relocations were caused by the insecure plague situation in the city. Yet it is surprising that the diary does not mention Lokmanya Tilak even once. Gangadhar Tilak was, during the 1890s, the fountainhead of radical Maratha nationalism, and argued vehemently against the methods employed by the British administration to wipe out or confine the spread of the plague. Tilak, who held the disruption of eternal Hindu law and customs as the greatest plague to come over India, discarded all British attempts to battle the disease as just one other tool to subdue the Hindus. In the same way, he discarded reforms of the child marriage law and opposed the British education system. As Tilak himself wrote in a poem:

> ....What desolation is this!
> Foreigners are dragging Laxmi [The Goddess of Wealth]
> by the hands of persecution,
> along with her, plenty has fled,
> and with plenty, health.

Printing Tilak's portrait (Plate 6B, C) was undoubtedly a political statement, since Tilak was held responsible for incensing anti-British feelings to such a degree that he was considered to be the real culprit behind the murder of the collector and president of the plague committee of Poona—Walter Rand—and one other officer, who were both slain by the Chapekar brothers a few days after the Shivajee festival of 1897, on the eve of the Queen Victoria Diamond Coronation Jubilee, which took place on 22 June 1897. Tilak was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for seditious writing, and the assassins were caught and sentenced to death, after being given away by two informers. A brother of the assassins, Vasudevan Chapekar, avenged his brothers by slaying the informers, which brought him and another associate to the gallows as well.

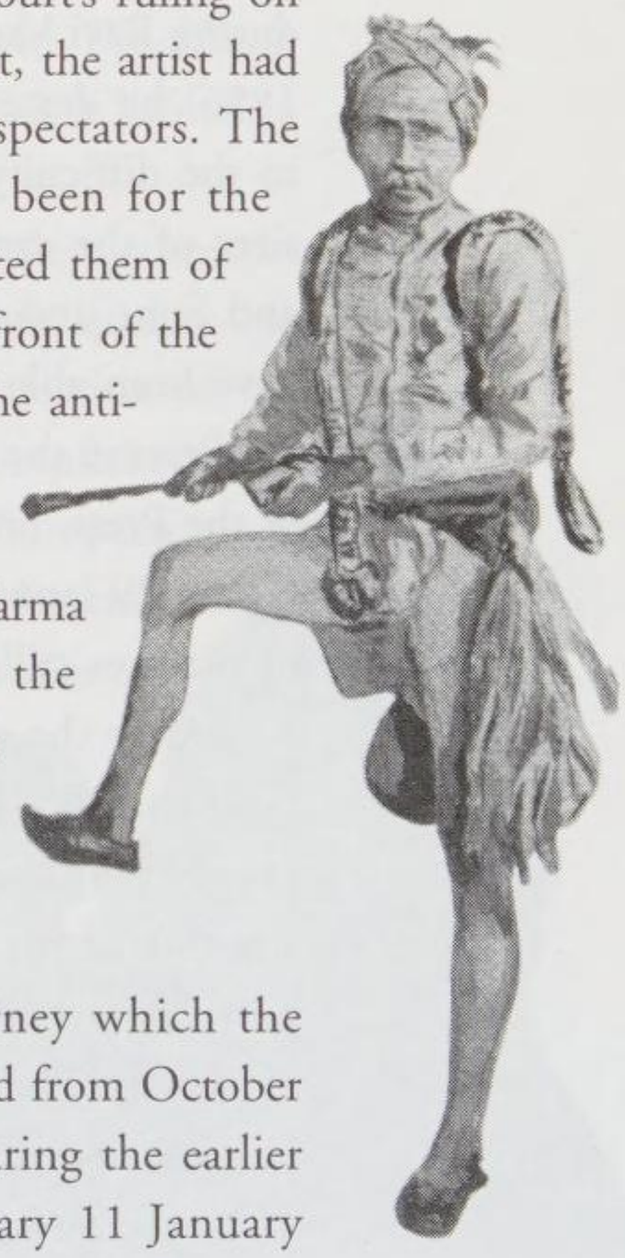
This second part—the killing of the Dravid brothers by Vasudevan Chapekar and the stir it caused in Poona—is mentioned by Raja Varma in his diary (Diary 8 February 1899).

A small chalk-litho of Tilak was found in the Kilimanur library, stamped as 'Trial Print'. Not to be overlooked is the fact that prints of indicted matter, besides being political statements, could also be sold at a premium, although not in the open.

It is not known if Tilak ever met Ravi Varma, but another famous Maratha leader and member of the Bombay legislative council, Govindkrishna Ghokale, was for a long time eager to meet the artist. When he was finally introduced to Ravi Varma, he thoroughly enjoyed talking to him. Ravi Varma asked Ghokale to introduce an amendment to the bill in the Central Assembly about the copyright law for pictures. Although Ghokale brought this before the Assembly, '...when the law was amended he did not have any use for it any more...' as one of Ravi Varma's biographers put it (Nayar, N.B., 1953: 136).

During these troubled years, the Varma brothers were living in Malavli in a tent directly overlooking a quarantine camp; its doctor-in-charge—a Brahmin—ate his meals with them, since he was ostracized by his own caste. This indicates that Raja Varma was very well informed on how matters stood, especially since he was an avid reader of newspapers. It is likely that the ostensible lack of political commitment in the diary is a sign of the wariness with which the Varma brothers had to present their political opinions in front of their socially heterogeneous clientele, which included members of the higher echelons of the British administration as well as the native feudal aristocracy, and also members of the national bourgeoisie.

The diary lists a number of persons who played important roles in the nationalist awakening of India. One of them—Judge Mahadev Govind Ranade, an important Hindu social reformer of the time, 'the clever coppersmith in his efforts to weld old and new India together...' (*Punch* quoted in Mitter, P., 1994: 157)—invited Ravi Varma and his entourage, including Prince Martanda Varma of Travancore, to sit in the courtroom during the hearing of a curious appeal by a businessman from Poona against an indictment by the district court forbidding the sale of 'cheap German prints' of nude women (Plate 32). The final ruling of the Bombay High Court, in winding and obscure parlance, is one of the earliest and most interesting documents on censorship. The court finally held up the lower court's ruling on the account 'that naked pictures of classical subjects were not obscene, in that, the artist had higher ideals than those of merely exciting the sensual appetites of the spectators. The pictures in question might have been classed among them, had it not been for the introduction into them of modern silk umbrellas and apparel which divested them of their idealism' (Varma, C.R.R., 1896: 20). That of course was the judicial front of the influential members of the purity movement, which was at the same time the anti-nautch movement in personal union with the temperance agitation. And Judge Ranade was the fountainhead of all of these movements. The Varma brothers were surely the most alert listeners during that ruling, since Ravi Varma himself was a master of blending eroticism with classical subjects under the veneer of religious 'idealism' to immunize them, at least, against the appetite of the censors. It has to be remembered that Ravi Varma had painted some of his apsaras in much more revealing poses, and was at that time set to produce them in oleographic prints.



As mentioned earlier, Raja Varma began his diary during the journey which the Varma brothers undertook in the company of Martanda Varma, which lasted from October 1894 till May 1895. It is not known if Raja Varma had kept journals during the earlier travels which he had undertaken since 1878 with his elder brother (Diary 11 January 1901). Since some entries refer to earlier journeys in retrospect, this does not seem very

likely. One entry from 1901 contains a list of states and principalities which they had visited together till then (Diary 15, 18—19 January 1901). According to that account, their first co-operation took place in Pudukkottai, where they attended and painted the coronation ceremonies. This commission was most probably arranged by the good offices of the Dewan of Pudukkottai, Sir Seshayya Sastri. Today, the painting is displayed in the Pudukkottai Museum, side by side with a painting in the Tanjore style of the same theme, but done by a traditional court painter. Unfortunately, the entry does not record the important commissions in Baroda (1881–2) and Mysore (1885). It was these commissions which laid the foundations of Ravi Varma's overwhelming fame as a visionary of Indian mythology and also opened up financial possibilities for his future enterprises in printing.

Ravi Varma's relation to money is hardly mentioned in the diary, which comments only once that he could have been one of the richest persons in the country, without explaining what went wrong. His debt after the adventure with the Press—according to the diary—was Rs 80,000, which by 1902 he had reduced to a few thousands. It is clear from the prices listed for his paintings in the diary that he could not have extinguished such a tremendous sum only by painting portraits. The price for a full-length painting was Rs 1500, Rs 750 for a half-length, down to a mere Rs 350 for a portrait even smaller than that. Even his mythological canvases never commanded a price higher than Rs 1500. The commission from the Travancore State, which was renewed regularly for several years between 1896 and 1901, brought less than Rs 2000 annually. (It might be useful to compare these sums to the per capita income, which was Rs 30 annually during Ravi Varma's days). In one of his letters to the Travancore State (Diary 26 November 1896) he describes how he derived the price for his paintings: 'My charges are according to the difficulty of treatment of the subjects, the number of figures they contain and the sizes of the canvases' (see note 79). Although the paintings were accepted with honours and fame and elevated Ravi Varma into the highest echelons of society, he would never have been able to reduce his tremendous debts with his painting works alone. The sale of the Press to the German chief technician Schleicher and Shriram Pant, one of the proprietors of the Press, brought in Rs 25,000, besides a general clearance from the debts on the Press (Diary 29 January 1901). The installments of the sum and the royalties for the reproduction of pictures still supplied to the Press did come only sporadically, if at all.

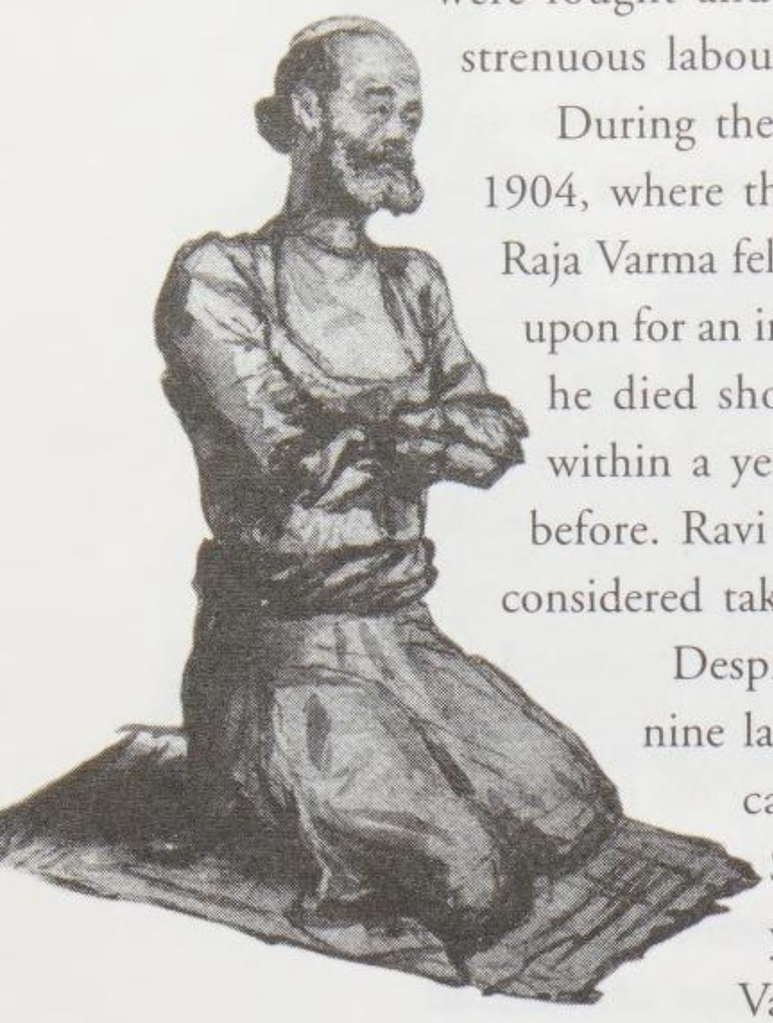
After the death of Raja Varma Cheria Koil Thampuran (the head of the Kilimanur clan) in 1903, Ravi Varma gained supreme control over the family affairs and the extensive property of the Kilimanur lineage, in which he earlier already had an important say on account of his social standing. He seemed to have been an innovative manager of the property, since he introduced the cultivation of cash crops; the diary mentions the cultivation of pepper. The self-consciousness of the artist is also manifested in several extensions and new constructions to the 'Palace' and the family temples. Ravi Varma had the Palace more or less remodelled. He erected a large atelier for himself, and the living quarters of the junior lineages were grouped around the main buildings in smaller courts.

Shortly after 1900 he had begun the construction of a large two-storey mansion with a pillared portico, in a style which blended attractively classical masonry pillars with south Indian gabled roofs. The temple got a permanent flag staff with a silver horse atop as the coat of arms of the house of Kilimanur, while the entrance was enlarged to an elephant porch. The elephant stable was enlarged for one more animal, the afore-mentioned Govinda, who now fed beside the two elephants which were part of the remuneration of the first commission from Mysore. All of them were equipped with new decorative drapings after the northern Thrissur style, studded with silver globules. Ravi Varma was definitely fond of elephants! He was now the leader of an important aristocratic lineage. So important and famous had he become, that visitors to the state tried to meet him before they even thought to get an appointment with the Maharaja, a fact which led to embarrassing situations.

During all these times, Raja Varma remained the quiet backstage worker, assistant, and chronicler to his famous brother. His own paintings were now gaining the recognition and medals which earlier were his brother's, who, although still participating in exhibitions, did not compete for prizes anymore. The art of the Varma brothers resulted in smooth genre-paintings of a non-committal nature, which hardly offered any point of attack to the similarly non-committal art critique of the time. Still, at times voices of discontent complained that 'one would have expected the best from the Varma Brothers', and counselled other painters as well: '...good colouring, but there is something wrong with the drawing of head and shoulders', and finally: '...All these were very much admired by the Indian visitors but to European observers they were all a little out of perspective and some of the colours seemed slightly over-vivid and out of balance, so that the general effect was not particularly pleasing' (Catalogue Industrial Arts Exhibition 1903). These critiques came shortly before the aesthetic position of Ravi Varma came under a more qualified attack. At the same time (1903) Raja Varma wrote an editorial in *The Hindu* about the Madras Industrial Exhibition, where he crossed swords with Mr Clifford, a Eurasian from *The Madras Mail*.

Raja Varma searched all his life for a better technique to express subtle nuances in light and feeling. And indeed some of his landscapes are of an impressionistic quality. He also understood his limitations in painting figures, and spoke of the completion of paintings of figurative subjects like a victory. Indeed he did some accomplished paintings of women, which radiate the eroticism so much sought after in European orientalizing paintings, which he could study in the art journals of which he and his brother were regular subscribers. Some of the landscape paintings were entries to the Madras Art Fair, where Raja Varma won prizes for several years. One of the last paintings, *At the Village Tank*, of a woman stepping out of a pond, shading her eyes against the sun, was awarded a gold medal in Madras in 1905—alas—posthumously.

Looking at his paintings, one wonders if, had he lived longer to proceed along his own path, he would have become the founder of a school of an open-air painting tradition. But Raja Varma died young. His brother had just presented him with a large plot of forest land from the family property, the difficult financial battles



were fought and won, and both brothers stood before a rich harvest after long and strenuous labour.

During the work for a major commission in Mysore in the later half of the year 1904, where the brothers were entertained royally and painted 'immersed in music', Raja Varma fell sick and sank very fast. His end came in Madras where he was operated upon for an inflammation of the intestines. Despite the best medical attention available, he died shortly after the new year of 1905. Ravi Varma lost both his brothers within a year's time, Gode Varma, his younger brother, having died only shortly before. Ravi Varma, at that time fifty-seven years old and afflicted with diabetes, considered taking *sanyas* after his sixtieth birthday.

Despite his grief, Ravi Varma attended to the large Mysore commission of nine large Puranic pictures, to which he had committed shortly before. These canvases were painted within the short span of time from April to September, in the studio of Kilimanur which he had erected only a few years before. By now he was being assisted by his younger son Rama Varma, who, after a long apprenticeship with his uncle and father, was becoming a painter in his own right. The public display of the completed paintings won Ravi Varma the acclaim which no other artist had ever, before or after, commanded. The nine paintings of mythological subjects are by now probably the best-known works of Ravi Varma. They were immediately taken up for publication by the Ravi Varma Press, and these prints became extremely popular.

Ravi Varma was now surely at his zenith, but personal afflictions were not over yet. While back in Mysore in 1905 to arrange the spaces for the pictures, his son was stricken with smallpox and the anxiety and grief told heavily on Ravi Varma; his diabetic condition worsened. Although his son survived to live to the ripe age of 87, Ravi Varma's health was broken. Still, an invitation to Madras and Mysore as member of the retinue of King George was a honour he could not refuse particularly since a year before he had been decorated with the Kaiser-i-Hind medal. He accompanied the trail of aristocrats to the jungle of Mysore, where the capturing of wild elephants was organized as a spectacle for the visiting king. The importance of the event, as well as of the person of the painter, becomes clear by the fact that he was transported in a motor car, one of the few to be imported to the state for this occasion. He painted these cars in one of his last paintings *The Khedda Camp*. After this royal extravaganza he went to Trivandrum where the wedding of the Senior Rani, his granddaughter Sethu Lakshmibai—at that time a girl of eleven years—was to be celebrated. His granddaughter had reached this status by adoption, after the Senior Rani of the Attingale lineage—Maharani Lakshmibai—died without an heiress. The wedding was an important political affair and therefore celebrated with pomp and grandeur.

Ravi Varma was to be present at many of the functions and celebrations and the strain of these journeys and official commitments told on his fragile health. After the wedding, he retired to Kilimanur where he took his annual ayurvedic treatment to stabilize his diabetic condition. But soon a fist-sized carbuncle appeared on his shoulder and his condition deteriorated fast. When word spread about the seriousness of his condition,

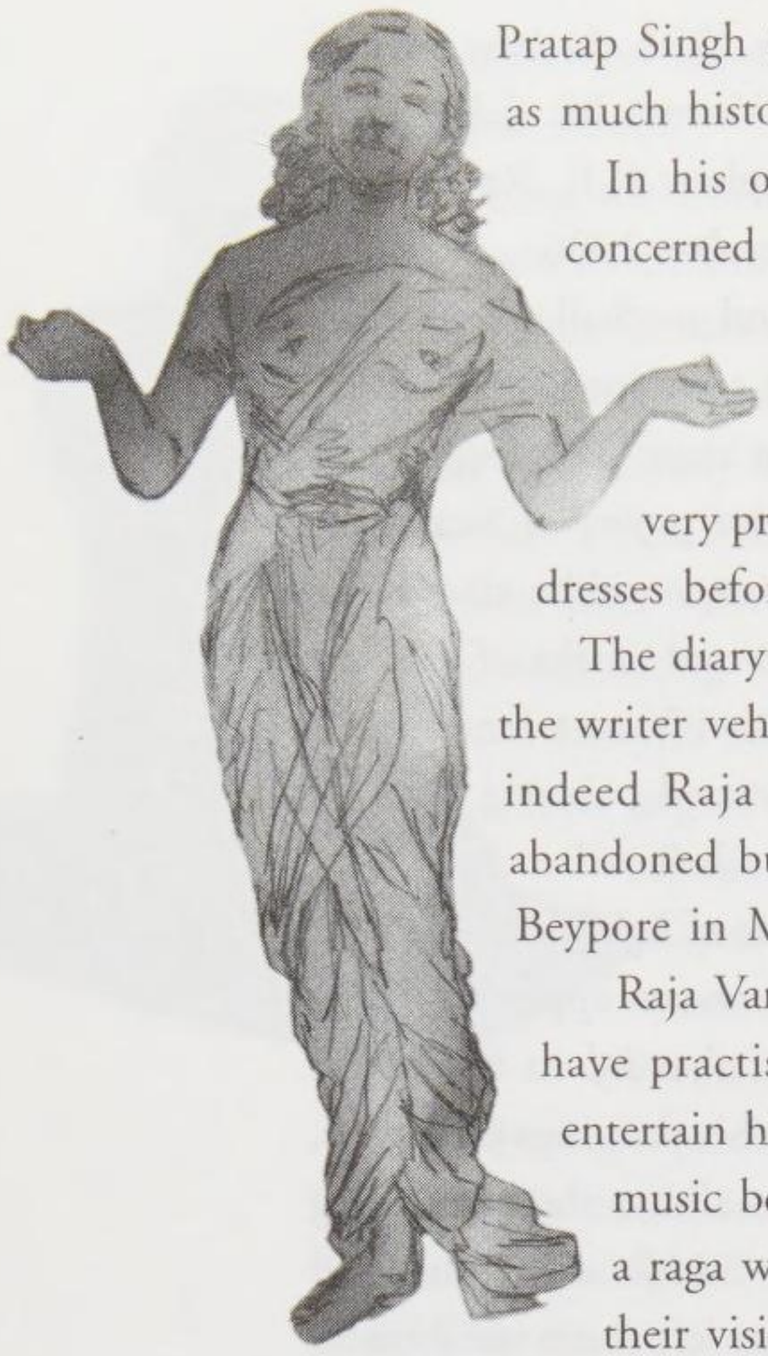
many of his friends from as far as Bombay descended on Kilimanur. With the best medical attention from Ayurvedic as well as allopathic practitioners, Ravi Varma's life faded away. He breathed his last on a mat of *kusha* grass, attended by his nephew K.R. Ravi Varma 'Painter', the son of his sister Mangalabai Thampuratty, on 2 October 1906.

Ravi Varma died at a time when his art was undisputed and unchallenged. True, during his consignment in Udaipur, he had to compete with the traditional taste of the Maharaja, who, before he sat for them for a portrait, had them copy paintings of his ancestors according to the old patterns. But otherwise, the superior power of 'academic' art was unchallenged. It met the intentions of the new de-culturated middle class in its desire to be adorned with a past conforming to the newly discovered works of classical Indian mythology as well as to new changing prestige values. Ravi Varma lent to this desire not only his brush and talent but also his charisma. He elevated painting from an anonymous craft to a highly paid commodity. He and his art were believed to have been bestowed with mythical powers. When he painted the flashing shaft of lightning in one of his last paintings *Rama subduing the Ocean*, it is said that a thunderstorm appeared out of the blue. Stories about the deceiving qualities of his paintings abound in his native Travancore. According to this lore, he was able to deceive bees with his drawings of flowers, and people stretched their hands after fruits he had painted. It was always these deceiving qualities which were valued most in academic paintings. The new middle class could not vibrate to the code of the traditional anymore, but academic realism left them spellbound. When the nationalist movement found a unifying and conscientious direction around 1900, it took only a few years more till the art of Raja Ravi Varma was discarded in favour of 'revivalist' schools, which were superficially closer to the traditional. Their purist stance to be traditional craft and 'high art' at the same time barred their impact on a wider audience, an impact which Ravi Varma had accomplished with the industrial replication of his imagery.

The critics of Ravi Varma were legion, severe and at times even ruthless. Coomaraswami, Nivedita, and others have accused his paintings of lacking Indian sentiments or even making a mockery of them; others blamed him for multiplying his images in cheap commercials, but it was just this which democratized visual imagery, which all the other art movements could not accomplish.

The diary enlightens us about many of the rather down-to-earth problems of the painters' professional life. But it is surprisingly quiet about areas one would expect an artist of Raja Varma's standing to comment upon. One of these is reflections upon traditional arts. During their journeys, the Varma brothers did see many traditional art collections in feudal courts—traditional miniature paintings, wall paintings, and also architectural remains of ancient periods. It is strange that ancient or traditional forms of applied art are never reflected upon, save in one or two instances, touching the theme in a casual and superficial way.

The Varma brothers were more or less forced to copy portraits from ancient miniature paintings in oil on canvas by the Maharaja of Udaipur, who commissioned the painting of several of his ancestors. He also supplied them with old weapons and equipment for the portrait of Rana



Pratap Singh (Plates 11, 13), indicating that, to him, the traditional style had as much historic 'real-value' as the original artefacts.

In his own mythological paintings, Ravi Varma was not particularly concerned about the historic authenticity of equipment, draping, or apparel. These paintings bring to mind that Ravi Varma was a theatre-crack, frequenting the Bombay theatres. Many of his mythological paintings look like scene stills from theatre productions, and from very provincial productions at that, where actors are overacting in awkward dresses before naively painted backdrops.

The diary hardly ever argues along historical lines, doing so only once when the writer vehemently argues about the right of his family to some land. Then indeed Raja Varma even argues archaeologically, claiming some ancient abandoned buildings in the forest as remains from his ancestors, the Rajas of Beypore in Malabar.

Raja Varma is more profound when talking of music, which he seemed to have practised quite lovingly. He apparently had a good voice and could entertain his audiences for hours. That he had training in traditional classical music becomes clear from an entry where he takes down the notation for a raga which he had heard several years before from dance girls on one of their visits to Baroda (see note 212) (Diary 23 April 1903). This is not so very surprising, since in his own lineage there were many famous musicians and authors of Kathakali plays and his mother Uma Ambabai (Plate 2A) herself was a poetess and author of a Tullal work, which her son Ravi Varma published after her death.

Even more surprising is that Raja Varma never ever speaks about the traditional forms of dance theatre of his native place. Theatre, for him, is the European proscenium stage, the frontal impact on an audience seated in the dark and the Varma brothers were at home in that world. They knew actors and actresses and their intrigues. At times, entries speak authoritatively on certain productions of Shakespeare in Hindustani.

Theatres with proscenium stages with interchangeable sceneries hvave existed in Bombay since the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the Varma brothers frequented the English as well as the Parsi theatres there. The mythological imaginations of Ravi Varma follow closely the dramatic possibilities of that stage. There is not a single mythological painting by Ravi Varma which could not be staged as 'tableaux vivants' on such a stage; or the other way round: Ravi Varma's mythologic dramatization never grew above the possibilities of the provincial European theatre. His dramatization of mythological themes is at times so close to scenes from European theatre that he captioned oleographs with verses from European classics. His 'Keechaka and Sayandri' came with the caption:

> Now is he come unto the chamber's door
> That shuts him from heave of his thoughts...
>
> Shakespeare
> *The Rape of Lucrece*

'Arjuna and Subadhra', also titled as 'A Pair of Lovers':

...Each was the other's mirror, and but real
joy sparkling in their dark eyes like gem
and know such brightness was but reflection
of their exchanging glances of affection ....

Byron
Don Juan

The picture of 'Disrobing of Draupadi' was subtitled:

Wickedness ends in Misery,
The wolf haeth sized his Prey,
The poor Lamb cries....

Shakespeare
The Rape of Lucrece

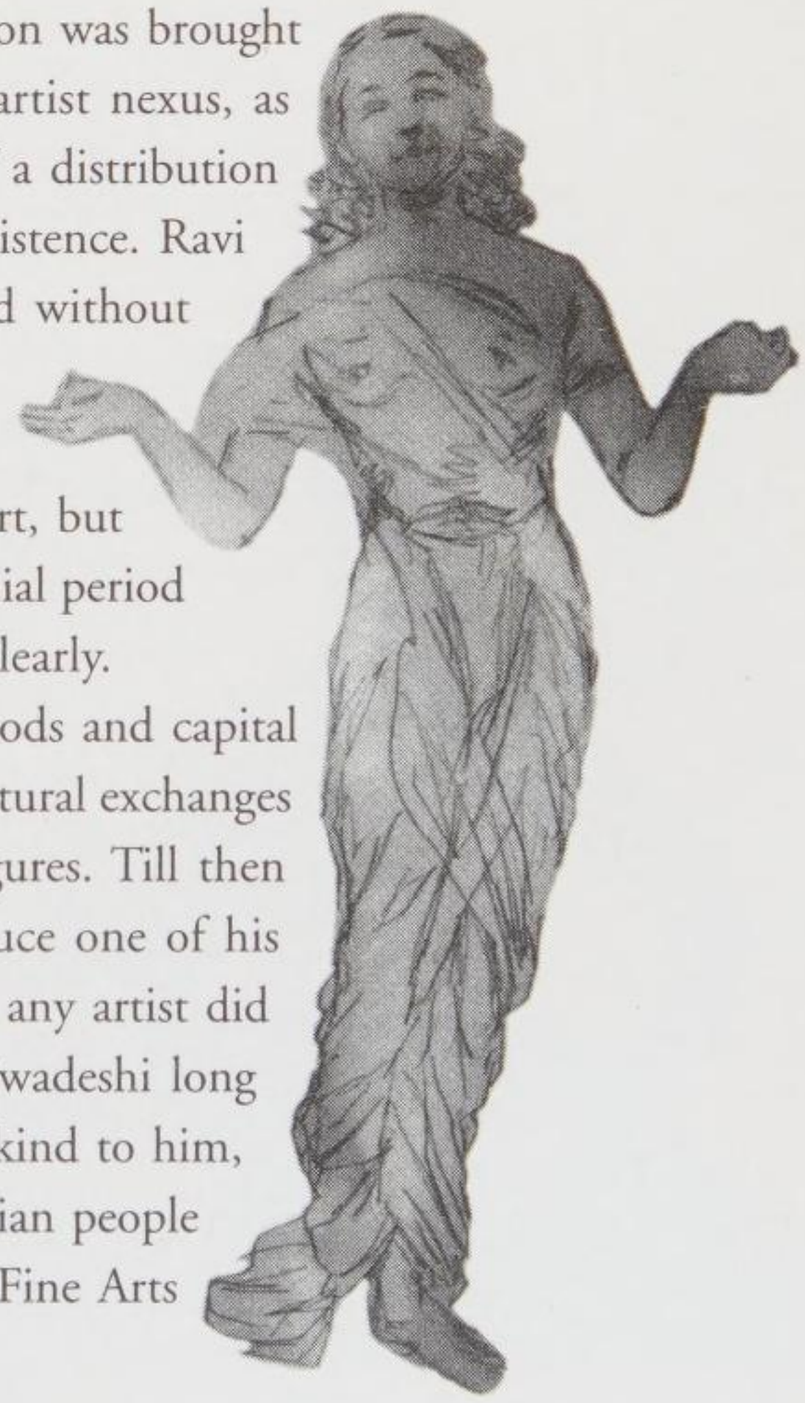
Although his art might have been the hybridization of Indian mythology, he was not producing painting (as Coomaraswamy said 'as any European student could paint after perusal of the necessary literature and a superficial study of Indian life'), but as an Indian painter who, with European technique and according to the possibilities of European academic realism and dramatic possibilities, visualized and illustrated Indian mythology.

In retrospect, it is quite clear that, at that time, such art was the only possible way for a brahmanical imagery to find pan-Indian acceptance. Consciously or unconsciously, Ravi Varma succeeded in that, and he succeeded to such a degree that his visuals were taken as the mythology itself.

For the first time there existed a universal imagery in gestures, types, and draperies for the huge corpus of Indian mythology. This unification was brought about by Ravi Varma's charisma and personification of the art–artist nexus, as well as by his industrial entrepreneurship and the building up of a distribution network for a market which was hitherto only in rudimentary existence. Ravi Varma not only developed the imagery but also the market, and without that this universal acceptance would just not have been possible.

The diary is a multilayered document on the development of the aesthetics of mass communication in India. It deals with art, but under the surface, the blunt reality and contradictions of the colonial period around 1900, when British Imperialism was at its peak, show clearly.

The veins of trade were not only open for the transfer of goods and capital but also for the transfer of values and ideas. In this wide field of cultural exchanges and cross currents, Ravi Varma is one of the most interesting figures. Till then there existed no nationalist art-manifest, nor did he ever introduce one of his own; still, he has influenced Indian culture on a wider scale than any artist did before or after him. He created art according to the project of Swadeshi long before the term was coined. Art criticism after his death was not kind to him, although no other artist could capture the imagination of the Indian people as a whole as he did with his cheap prints from the Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press.



C. Raja Raja Varma, on the other hand, lived too short and too close in the shadow of his overwhelmingly famous brother to create an impact on Indian society in his own name. However, he can be considered as one of the most influential art personalities, working quietly on his brother's projects. His recognition as an independent artist is long overdue. He was a great landscape painter, who could capture the serenity and atmosphere of his India.

C. Raja Raja Varma will be remembered for one more thing from here on: his diary, or what is still extant of it, is an authentic narration of the journeys of a freelancing painter and art personality at the cusp of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

The Diary of
C. Raja Raja Varma

The Diary* of C. Raja Raja Varma

1895

Tuesday 1st January 1895

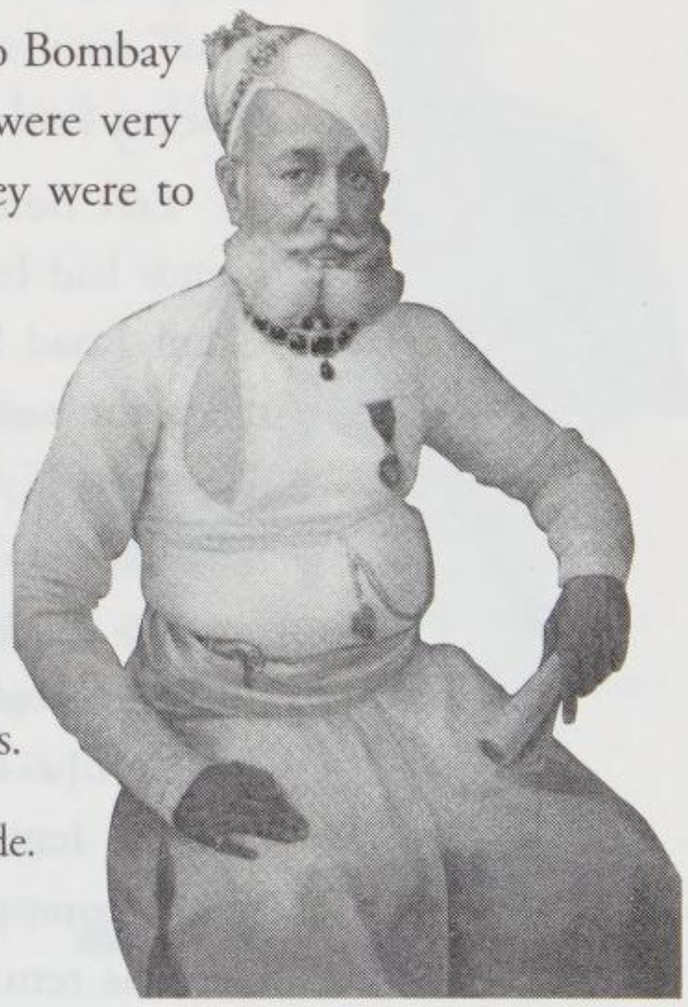
I got up at 6 in the morning and having sipped a cup of coffee drove to the Esplanade [in Bombay] to see the parade but it was over before I got there. Had to return home. Received a letter from Janaki.[2] In the evening paid a visit to Mr Shivaji and delivered to him His Highness New Year's Gift of an Ivory Kistna [Krishna]. At 7 called on Mr Govardhan Das[3] on business, but as he had an engagement had to make appointment for the next day.

Saturday 5th January 1895

At the request of Mr Griffiths,[4] H.H. and we went to the J.J. Art School[5] and he showed H.H. all the paintings and statues there and invited H.H. to visit the school when the students were at work. In the evening drove to the Victoria Garden where the Governor's Band was playing.

Saturday 6th January 1895

Messers Kunjaraman Nair and Govind Pillai who had come to Bombay en-route for Benares were invited by H.H.[6] for supper and they were very much pleased with H.H's kindness and hospitality. They said they were to leave Bombay the next day for Nasik.



Monday 7th January 1895

In the afternoon we got permission to go and see the P and O's Company's steamer 'Caledonia' one of the largest we have ever seen. The first class accommodations and furniture were splendid. One of the ship's officers showed us and explained every portion of it. On our return visited Messers Thacker & Co. and a few other booksellers.

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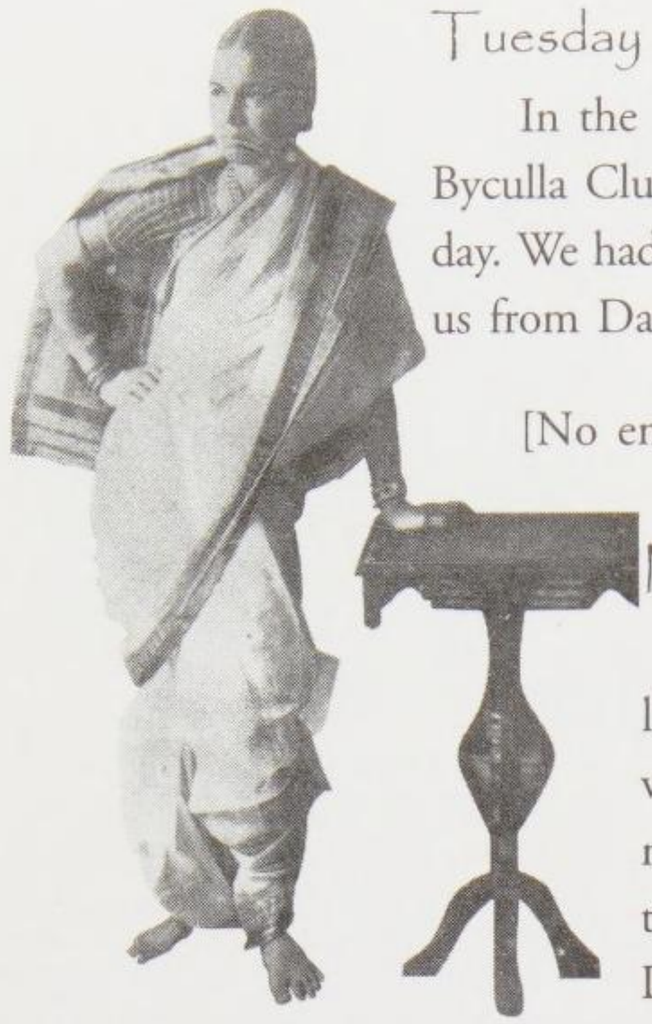
* No editorial changes, save any additions within square brackets, have been made.
Key: [?]: unsure reading
[+++]: words missing
[abc]: author's remarks



Tuesday 8th January 1895

In the morning at 9 H.H. paid a visit to Ms Justice John Jardine at the Byculla Club and he kindly invited H.H. to go and see the High Court[7] one day. We had a drive in the evening to the Fort and on our way home took with us from Dawood Bhai's the embroidered coat and trousers he had prepared.

[No entry between 8th and 14th January 1895]

Monday 14th January 1895

In the evening at 9.30 there was a singing party to which a large number of H.H's friends had [been] invited. The singing which was Hindustani was excellent and continued till 4 in the morning. Everyone enjoyed the entertainment heartily. Among those present were Messers Govardhan Das Khatu, Jugmohan Das, Dharmsey and Narotam Morarji and others.

Tuesday 15th January 1895

Notwithstanding the previous day's vigil we went to the Tivoli Theatre[8] to see 'The School for [*sic*] [of] Scandal' performed. The acting was splendid and called for the loud applause from the audience. Sir Peter and Lady [+++] and Charles [+++] were capital.

[No entry for 16th January 1895]

Thursday 17th January 1895

Messers Dharmsey and Narotam Morarji invited us to his house the China Bay a beautiful building to see a novel performance in which first an earthen pot was transformed into a living human head which again turned into a glass fish pond and so on. The illusion was startling.

Friday 18th January 1895

Left Bombay for the Charni Road station by the Mail at 9. Some four friends had been at the station to see us off. Mr Jugmohan Das met us at the Grant Road Station. After midnight the cold was intense. Got up at 5 and made the necessary preparations to alight at Baroda.

Saturday 19th January 1895

We reached Baroda early in the morning at 6.30 and H.H was received by the officers who represented the Durbar[9] heartily and, escorted by five sowars drove to [+++] our residence. In the afternoon we visited the Public Offices and the Laxmi Vilas Palace where one can spend hours in admiring the architecture, paintings, statues and furniture. After a drive through the Public Gardens returned home. Supper being over we witnessed the nautch by the

Tanjore Girls[10] who draw a salary of Rs 500 per mensem. The nautch which was very good lasted till 11.

Sunday 20th January 1895

At day break drove to Mohanpura to see a cheetah hunt.[11] We had to drive in bullock tongas[12] for nearly four miles to reach the jungle where we saw large herds of deer grazing. The cheetahs or leopards which were driven in carts before us were let loose and they made a few bounds after a herd; but the deer were too fast for them. This was what we had really wanted. While we got an idea of the sport, we were saved the pain of seeing the innocent creatures killed by the cheetahs. Visited the splendid palace and gardens of Mohanpura. The Gaikwar[13] returned in the morning from Europe.

Monday 21st January 1895

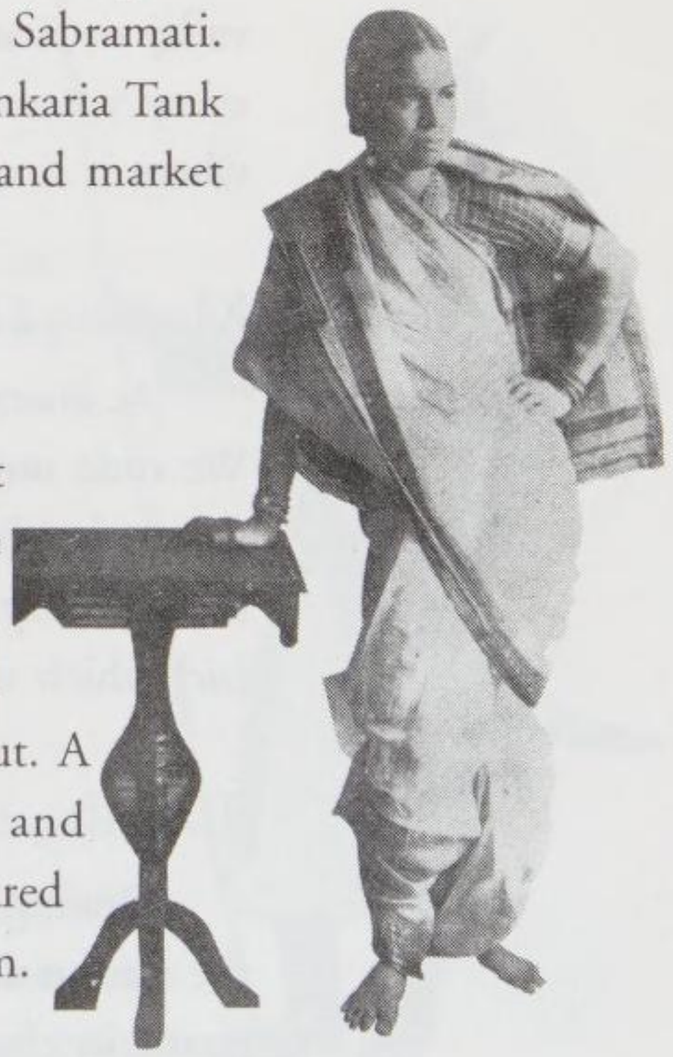
In the afternoon at 3 we visited the silver and gold guns,[14] Palace and the State Jewels which it is said have been estimated at 10 crore of rupees. Next the Shri Sayaji Library was visited. At 4 punctually H.H. paid a visit to the Maharaja by appointment. H.H. The Gaikwar was very plainly dressed in white and had an emerald necklace round his neck. The conversation which lasted for 20 or 25 minutes was very pleasant. At about 5 H.H. called on the Resident Col.[J.] Biddulph who said he was shortly retiring. Returned home after seeing H.H's Saloon Carriages.

Tuesday 22nd January 1895

We were up at 5 and drove to the station at 6.15, but on arrival there learnt that the train would be late by an hour. At 7.30 started for Ahmedabad which was reached at 10.30. In the afternoon visited Jama Masjid, passed through the [+++] and Bhadur Citadel to the [+++] Bridge over Sabramati. Next drove to Shah Alum the tomb of a saint and then to the Kankaria Tank with a pretty garden in the middle. Ahmedabad is a busy town and market next to Bombay.

Wednesday 23rd January 1895

In the morning at 9 we paid a visit to the Jain Temple[15] built at a cost of 10 lakhs of rupees by the father of Jaising [+++] the architecture is purely Hindu and extremely beautiful. There is a large Jain population in the town. Next went to the factory owned by the same gentlemen where beautiful wood carving is turned out. A certain gentlemen [*sic*] on seeing our thick woolen overcoats and cashmere head dresses jokingly observed to another that we appeared to be bent on a Himalayan expedition. Left Ahmedabad at 3 p.m. for Ajmere.



Thursday 24th January 1895

Passed a very chilly night in the train. Arrived at Ajmere a quarter to twelve. Narsing Das and Partha Sarathi Iyengar received us on behalf of Seth Lachman Das.[16] We got a pretty bungalow for residence. At 3 visited the Mayo College[17] Ana-Sagar and Dargah[18] [+++] the chief sights in the town. The College is an exceedingly beautiful edifice and the Dargah was equally beautiful. There was very little water in the Ana-Sagar.

Friday 25th January 1895

In the morning the thermometer stood at 44 Cet [F]. 7 started for Pushkar seven miles off. A large lake as sacred as the Ganges and a temple of Brahma are the things that attract large crowds of pilgrims every year. Returned home at 12.30. In the evening visited a Jain temple the interior of which was made of coloured glass joined together.

Saturday 26th January 1895

At 12 noon started for Jeypure by [+++]. With the exception of a few green spots the train passed over the coast [coarse] land abounding with peacock and deer. Reached Jeypure at 5.35 and drove in Government carriages to Rambag a beautiful garden and bungalow two miles from the city. All arrangements had been made for our comfort. The cold was less than at Ajmere.

Sunday 27th January 1895

At about 2 we drove through the principal streets of the town to the Ramnivas Bagh and visited the Albert Hall and Museum which contains a large collection. Then started for the Ghaut Gate, the old fortifications in the valley or pass between the hills, which surrounded the city. One meets peacocks every where. The streets of the town are broad and straight with fountain where it is crossed by another [*sic*].

Monday 28th January 1895

At noon started for Amber the old palace of the Rajas in a beautiful valley. We rode on elephants part of the five miles. On our return visited the new palace which is extensive. The front view from the garden is imposing, though there is very little worth seeing in the interior. There was band in the garden [*sic*] which we enjoyed for a short time.

Tuesday 29th January 1895

Driving through the principal streets of the town in the afternoon reached the station at 5. We had to wait for half an hour before the train arrived. The guard in charge of it was from Southern India and spoke a little Tamil. We

started about quarter to 6 for Muthra [Mathura]. At [+++] our carriage was detached from the train which proceeded to Agra. This was at about 3 o'clock at night. We slept in the carriage till morning.

Wednesday 30th January 1895

At 9.30 a.m. we started for Muthra [Mathura] which was reached at 11. We put up at Jumna Bagh the beautiful garden and Bungalow belonging to Seth Lachman Das, the wealthiest man in the town. The Jumna [Yamuna River] in which there was not much water flowed just below us. In the evening we drove through the stone paved streets of the town round Cantonment[19] and back home. At 7 our excellent host paid the prince a visit which lasted for 20 minutes.

Thursday 31st January 1895

In the morning at 9 the Prince paid a return visit to Mr Lachman Das who keeps a princely establishment and then bathed in his ghaut.[20] The water was ice cold. Worshipped at the chief temple of Krishna.[21] In the evening took a drive through the town and round the cantonment. The day was very wet and raining unusual at this time of the season. At night attended a musical party at our host's in honour of 'Vasant [+++]'[22] the beginning of the Holy Holidays.[23]

Friday 1st February 1895

Performed our mother's Shradh[24] on the Jamu Ghaut. In the afternoon started for Gotul a distance of 6 miles. It is a small village having nothing worth seeing. We were surrounded by a large crowd of beggars. The association of ideas connected with Kistna's boy-hood makes the place interesting. On our return we were detained for an hour at the RY [railway] Bridge which was used also for carriages and passengers.

Saturday 2nd February 1895

In the morning started for Brindhaban[25] seven miles off. The temple of Seth Lachman Das dedicated to God Ranganath[26] is of the Southern Indian style and is peopled by Iyengars[27] who perform the pujas.[28] Visited the old temple of Govind Dev[29] partly demolished and yet a beautiful structure. Next the marble temple of Lala Bohuri Lal of [+++] which is modern. We returned home by rail which is extended as far as Brindhaban.

Sunday 3rd February 1895

Our kind host took us for a stroll in the garden all the fountains being let loose. In the evening had a pleasant boating on the river. The town appeared very beautiful from the Jamna. At one ghaut [ghat] we were amazed

to see monkeys and tortoises fighting for grams and channu.[30] The monkeys had the audacity to ride on the tortoises and pick up floating grams.

Monday 4th February 1895

At noon went to Govardhan 13 miles off to see the famous hill which Krishna is said to have raised on his finger to shield the Gopas[31] from rain. Really there was no hill but only a low rock in the middle of a tank called 'Manasa Ganga'. There is a very poor temple on the rock which they say is a very old one.

Tuesday 5th February 1895

Spent the whole day in-doors as His Highness did not feel quite well, and yet our kind host had arranged for amusements. A number of men who were celebrating the Holi came singing and dancing to the sound of big drums and cymbals. We next saw a wrestling match. At 10 o'clock at night we went to the station and slept in the reserved carriages which were to take us to Agra next morning.

Wednesday 6th February 1895

At 6 Seth Lachman Das came to the station to see us off. We reached Agra at 9.30 and were received by Seth Saheb's [+++] and drove to his bungalow on the very brink of the broad Jamuna. In the afternoon visited first the tomb of Etmud-ud-dowlla [Itmad-ud-daulah] with very delicate carving. The Taj—the most wonderful building in the world was next visited. There is nothing so grand enchanting [*sic*] as the Taj from the outer gate with the rows of cypresses. Returned home through the cantonment and native town.

Thursday 7th February 1895

Early in the morning we drove to the [+++] Sikandra Tomb[32] five miles from the city. This is the last resting place of the great Akbar and therefore unusually interesting. It is built of red sand-stone inlaid with white marble. In the afternoon we paid a visit to the 'Fort' which contains the marble palaces of the Emperors. The Moti Masjid is the most beautiful in the Fort being entirely of white marble. The Dewani Khas [Diwan-i-Khas][33] the private bathing places of the Sultans are all admirable. We saw the subterranean cellars which leads to [+++].

Friday 8th February 1895

In the morning drove to Ram Bagh which belonged [+++] [to] the Mogul Emperors. There is nothing at present worthy of a visit in it. It is on the bank of the Jamuna. The Prince took a few photographs of Etmud-ud-Dowlla [Itmad-ud-daulah][34] which was at the same time being photographed by a party of

American ladies and gentlemen. The arrangements at Gwalior not being complete we could not start in the evening. At night information was received that everything was ready.

Saturday 9th February 1895

We left by the 4 p.m. train for Gwalior and passed through green fields of wheat. Crossed the Chambal and reached Gwalior at about 9. H.H. was received by a Sirdar[35] and Palace Officers and driven to Vishnunathshant[?] Palace facing a beautiful lake with flight of steps on the palace side. There were pleasure boats and launches ready for use. Behind us could be seen the stately Palace 'Jai Vilas' where the young Maharaja lives.

Sunday 10th February 1895

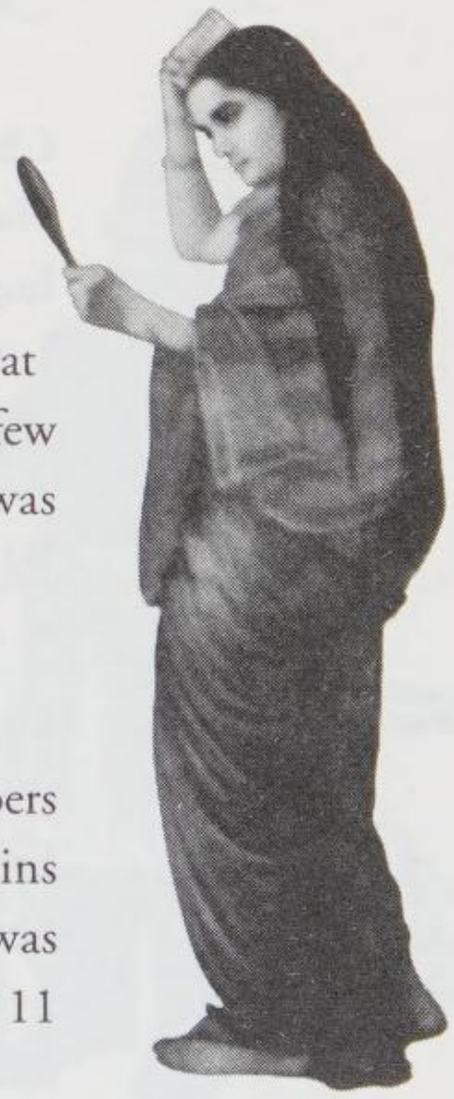
In the morning visited the museum which promises to become an excellent one and the Moti Mahal which was the old residence of the Maharaja. In the evening went up the famous Gwalior Fortress—which is built on a rocky hill—on elephants with howdas.[36] The road up the hill was beautifully clean [and] very steep. There were the ruins of a few old temples and palaces, one of the latter being by Man Singh who lived in the 15th Century.

Monday 11th February 1895

In the morning paid a visit to the young Maharaja who has a very amicable and good hearted. The interview lasted for about one hour. In the afternoon had a ride on the small rail-way which extends for about 10 Miles with the Maharaja's Palace in the middle. Later in the evening had a pleasant boating in the lake. At night there was singing by some of the best musicians in state services. The entertainment lasted till 12 o'clock.

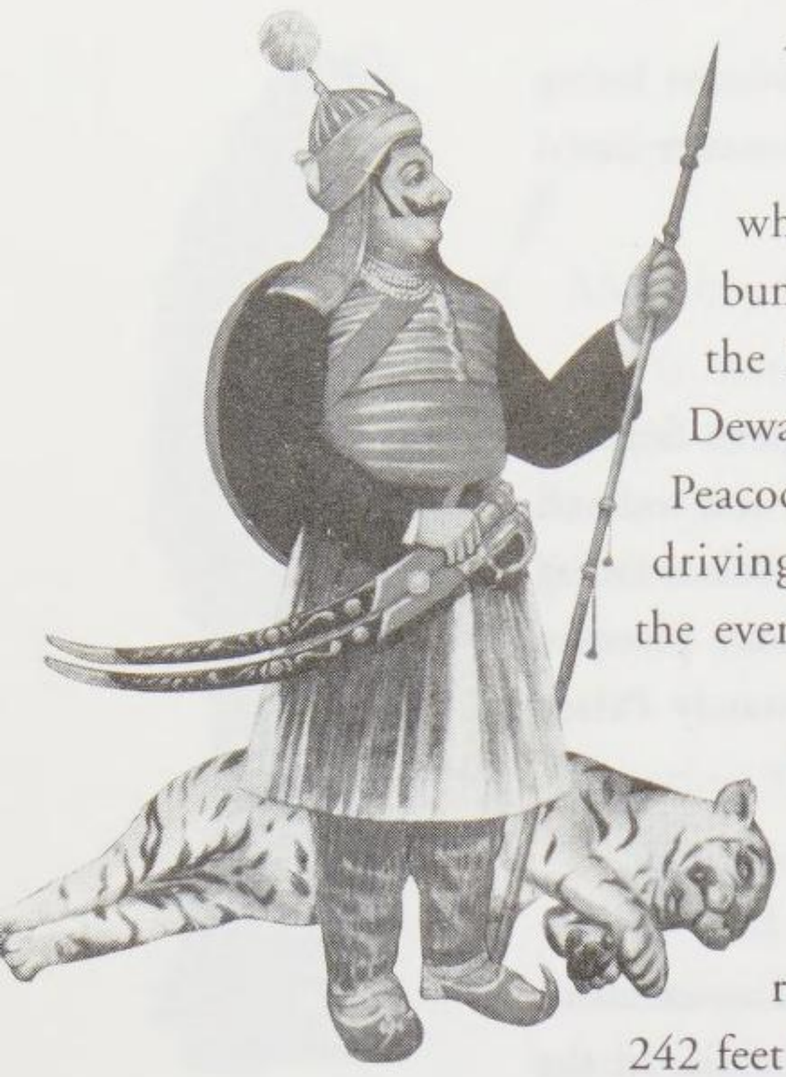
Tuesday 12th February 1895

In the morning drove through the camp and saw a regiment on parade. The discipline and get up of the Scindian[37] forces are well known. Saw a great deal of the town which is called Lashkar.[38] Received a visit from Ganpat Rai Mahurhur. Left Gwalior by the 4 o'clock train for Ulewar [Alwar].[39] A few miles from Agra an accident happened to our train which fortunately was unattended with danger.



Wednesday 13th February 1895

Arrived at Ulewar at 9.30 and were received by the Sirdars and members of council. After breakfast visited the palace armory stables which contains [*sic*] a large number of beautiful animals, the park in which the [+++] was noteworthy and the lake which supplies water for irrigation purposes. At 11 o'clock at night we left for Delhi.



Thursday 14th February 1895

Early in the morning we reached Delhi with the first sight of which we were very favorably impressed. We put up at a small bungalow at [+++] in the suburbs of the city. In the afternoon visited the Fort in which were the palaces of the Mogul Emperors [;] the Dewaniam [Dewan-i-Am] is splendid and it was here that the celebrated Peacock Throne was placed. The Jumma Masjid was next visited and driving through the beautiful Chandni Chowk[40] returned home in the evening.

Friday 15th February 1895

In the morning visited the museum and at about 12 started for Kutab Minar[41] a distance of 11 miles. On the way we saw the ruins of several beautiful mosques. The Kutab is a gigantic tower 242 feet high with a flight of steps going up to the top. Near it is the Iron Pillar. On our return we visited Humayun's tomb and driving through the fort returned home. Started for Caunpore [Kanpur] by the rail which left at 10.

Saturday 16th February 1895

We reached early in the morning at Caunpore [Kanpur]. Our lodging was not a very comfortable one. After breakfast we started for the Memorial Garden where during the mutiny[42] a large number of English men, women and children were massacred and thrown into a well over which the memorial is erected. This is the only thing worth seeing here. In the evening at 7 left for Lucknow where we put up at the palace of the Maharaja of Ayodhia.

Sunday 17th February 1895

We commenced sight seeing in the afternoon with the aid of a guide, Chaltee Manzil, the Museum, a Library, the portrait gallery where all the Nawabs and Kings of Oudh are represented. The great Imambara with its huge hall were [*sic*] visited in turn. I must not omit the old residency[43] and the [+++] the walls of which bear still spots of shell marks. Driving through the suburbs which extend far and wide returned home.

Monday 18th February 1895

Kalliyana Rama Iyer a native of Nagapatam and the chief good's clerk at Lucknow was very serviceable to us. We drove to Dil Kusha Palace in ruins were [*sic*] Sir H. Havelock[44] died, to Law Martin College, an old building after European style and through Wingfield park back to Husainabad an extremely beautiful edifice. The palace abounds in beggars who are sometimes very troublesome. The Kaiserbagh was next visited. The Somali River[?] [Gomti River] on which the town stands is small.

Tuesday 19th February 1895

In two days we had seen all that was interesting. In the morning the Prince visited the Chowk[45] in the native town which is crowded with brokers, beggars, merchants and bad muslims through out the day. The streets are so narrow that carriages could hardly go. But in the European quarters the green lawns and Bungalows peeping through thick foliage are refreshing to the eye. The roads are very dusty which makes driving unpleasant.

Wednesday 20th February 1895

At 5 in the morning started for Ayodhia which was reached at 9. Our temporary residence though far from comfortable had one great convenience; the proximity of the River Sarayu. The place is infested by monkeys to the great annoyance of the residents, who notwithstanding, seem to pull on very well with them. We visited two or three of the principal temples after [a] bath in the river. We visited the birth place of Ram where the Mohammedan has not failed to build his mosque.[46] Left by 4 o'clock train for Fyzabad [Faizabad] and Benaras.

Thursday 21st February 1895

We passed through very fertile country and arrived at Benaras at 8.20 in the morning. His Highness was received by Mr Lazarus, The Maharaja of Vijayanagar's Agent[47] and taken to the place which is a fine building with every convenience. His Highness bathed in the Ganges which is half a mile from the palace. In the evening took a drive through the principal streets of the town, most of them being extremely narrow. The cold had considerably abated and we had fine weather.

Friday 22nd February 1895

Today the great Siva Ratri.[48] We had a bath in the river, the ghauts being all unusually crowded. It was thought advisable to visit the Temple of Vishweswar[49] in the evening, as the crowd was too great in the morning. In the evening when we went there, [it was with great difficulty that we made our way through the crowds which thronged the narrow streets]. The interior of the temple is very small so that it is dangerous to enter without proper bandovast. For us the place was partly cleared and we could get a good Darshan.[50]

Saturday 23rd February 1895

His Highness since the day of arrival used to bathe in the Kedar Ghaut daily. Then we came across several Malayalees,[51] some of whom said they were here for many years. In the evening we visited one of the gardens belonging to the Maharaja and after driving round the College which is a fine building, returned home before 9.30.

Sunday 24th February 1895

In the morning we went down in the boats from Asi to Varuna[52] between which are the other ghauts and temples. The sight was a splendid one, almost all the big native princes have their own temples, ghauts & chathrams.[53] We alighted from the boat at Raja Ghaut near the Dufferin Bridge.[54] In the evening we visited another Bungalow belonging to the Maharaja near the Cant [Cantonment] Station.

Monday 25th February 1895

This morning the remains of H.H's mother were deposited in the river with due ceremonials. H.H. next bathed at the Manikarnika Ghaut[55] and worshipped at the chief temples. The crowd on the Ghauts and the temples was something enormous. Large sums of money were thrown among the poor who were following H.H.

Tuesday 26th February 1895

H.H. bathed and performed Shradha at the Manikarnika again this morning and in the afternoon feasted three hundred Brahmins and gave them donations. In the evening Venu Madhava and Bhairava[56] were worshipped. At night there was singing and nautch at the palace. Saraswathi, the best singer in Benaras entertained the party till about 12, all enjoying the performance immensely.

Wednesday 27th February 1895

All bathed at Hanuman Ghaut and performed Shrardha and worshipped Bhavani and Karri Bai.[57] Started by the 1 p.m. train for Gaya. Mr Lazarus being present at the station to see us off. Reached Bankipur at 6 and H.H. was received by Chotalal who accompanied the party to Gaya. The journey from Bankipur to Gaya was very slow and tedious. Arrangements had been made for accommodation at Chotalal's house.

Thursday 28th February 1895

In the morning bathed in the Bhalgu [Falgu River] and performed Shradhas in the River at Vishnupad and Akshyavad.[58] When H.H. returned and breakfasted it was 2.30. The priest, unlike what we had heard, behaved in a very gentlemanly manner to H.H. at Akshayavad and was moderate in his demands though H.H. was as he put it for the time being his prisoner. Chotalal is a C.I.E., the title being given in consideration of his services during the mutiny. Drove round the town in the evening.

Friday 1st March 1895

Very early in the morning we drove to Buddha Gaya 6 miles off to see the old Buddhist temple more than 2000 years old and repaired by Government

recently. It is built on the site where Sakya Sinha[59] performed his tapas or penance. There is also the peepul tree.[60] A dispute between the Mahant & Dharmapal[61] is going on about an image. The temple is really interesting. We started for Bankipur at about 11 and arrived there at about 2. The interior of the house were [*sic*] utilized for a drive to the Ganges very broad here. The town is not large. Patna is the principal town of the district. Left at 6 by rail for Calcutta.

Saturday 2nd March 1895

Arrived at Howrah early in the morning and at half way was met by the Maharaja of Vijayanagaram who welcomed the prince to his bungalow heartily. In the afternoon visited the Museum,[62] the largest in India. Then drove to the riverside where large numbers of steamers were lying at anchor. The Maidan or Charangi [Chowringhee] is a vast plain with several statues on it lined by gigantic buildings. We found that the streets were not so well watered or cleaned as those of Bombay. We returned home by Old Court House Street and Bow Bazar. At night we went to the Royal Theater with the Maharaja and saw a performance by Hudson's surprise party.

Sunday 3rd March 1895

In the evening drove through the city but did not visit any particular place. A comparison between the city of the rising sun and the city of the setting sun shows that the latter is far more cleanly [*sic*] and the streets look more lively on account of the variety of colours. In the Calcutta streets we see only bare headed men and no women. At night the Maharaja left for Benaras.

Monday 4th March 1895

In the morning H.H. went by the train to Diamond Harbour where the Hugly is very broad through there were not any big steamers. This is the entrance to the River from the sea. The sun was very hot. After return visited a great portion of the town. At night there was a dance called Khimta by two Bengali girls; but it was not much relished.

Tuesday 5th March 1895

At 4 p.m. we started for Darjilling from Sealda by E.B. Railway. We passed over very flat country with mango, supari and other trees. Reached Damukdia Ghaut at about 8. The river is about 2 miles broad and it was crossed in a steamer which was crowded with passengers and luggage. At Sara Ghaut we got into the narrow gauge section of the Railway. It took about 25 minutes to cross the river. It was a moonlight [*sic*] night and the scene was grand. Damukdia Ghaut is 120 miles from Calcutta.

Wednesday 6th March 1895

In the morning at about 8 we reached Siliguri where the small Darjilling Himalayan Railway commenced. It is only like a steam [+++] [tram] way. The first portion of the journey is through thick dense forest. The train toils [*sic*] up like a serpent in a zig zag way. From Kurswang the climate changed and it became cold. At Shoom 7407 ft. the highest point it was extreme cold and we passed through dense masses of clouds. From Shoom ascended Darjilling a few hundred feet and the sight of the town was extremely pretty. The people belong to the mongolian race with broad flat faces and small eyes. The trees and plants were all of the temperate regions.

Thursday 7th March 1895

Early in the morning we went up Observatory Hill to see the snowy ranges but it was a very cloudy morning. We waited till the clouds cleared up a little and were glad to have glimpse of the snow through clouds. It was a sublime scene. In the afternoon we saw a great deal of the town ascending and descending the steep streets. The Botanical garden is neatly laid out and contains all the trees and flowers of the temperate regions. The tribes of people found are the Lepahas [Lepchas], Bhooteas [Bootias],[63] Tibetians, Nepalies and they have their own languages. They profess a form of Buddhism.

Friday 8th March 1895

We took breakfast early and getting into the train at 10 began to descend down the mountains. At 'Ghoom' the highest railway station in the Old World we again met the Witch whose photographs have been taken by several. As we descended lower and lower the change of climate was very marked. We began gradually to unbutton and cast off one dress after another. We had with us our fellow travellers a missionary and a Parsee.[64] Reached Siliguri at night fall.

Saturday 9th March 1895

At early dawn we reached Saraghaut and crossed over the Ganges which presented a charming spectacle lit up by the rising sun and dotted with small boats. As the people were rushing up the hills from the hot plains, there was no crowd in the down mail. Reached Calcutta at 11. In the evening visited the Eden Gardens. At night went to the 'Star' to witness a Bengali Performance of the Destruction of the God of Love. The singing was good though the acting was not as good as we expected.

Sunday 10th March 1895

In the morning visited 'Fort William' where the cannons of all sizes and the beautifully piled up iron balls struck us with wonder. In the evening crossed the Howrah Bridge and drove a long way off to see the Botanical Garden

which is one of the best in India. It is very extensive and contains trees of every kind. The Royal Palmaspecius of gigantic arec-nut trees [areca nut palm] were conspicuous by their extraordinary size.

Monday 11th March 1895

In the morning visited the Zoo which is decidedly the best in India both as regards the number of animals and the excellent way in which they are housed. J.M. Doctor, the Parsee gentlemen who has come from Bombay to study and introduce to the Victoria Gardens the arrangement of the Calcutta Zoo, took us round and showed all the houses. In the evening visited Messers Thackere Spink & Co. and at night left for Allahabad by the mail. A smart shower is starting. The Maharaja followed the prince to the station to see him off.

Tuesday 12th March 1895

Broke journey at Patna while the servants went to Bankipur a few miles off to get our breakfast ready. The station master who was a jolly old man told us that the town was a filthy and dirty one not worth a visit and yet we hired a carriage and drove to the town only to find that the station master was right in his opinion of the town. There is a line of Tramway through the principal streets and I doubt if it [+++]. Returned to Bankipur at 11 and after breakfast left in the afternoon at 4 by passenger. Also [+++] travelled with us who was a violinist and he amused us at night by a performance.

Wednesday 13th March 1895

Arrived at Allahabad at 4 in the morning. H.H. bathed and performed all ceremonies at the junction of the Ganges and the Jammuna where the white muddy water of the former mixed with the dark blue stream of the latter. In the evening visited the Thornhill and Mayne [Memorial] a Library which contains a good collection of books [,] next the Mayo Hall [,] a fine building, the College and the University buildings where there was a statue of Lord Mayo and a bust of A.S. Harrison the former Principal. Next drove to the Khusru Bagh with two or three old tombs and through the town returned home. The streets were crowded by a busy throng and presented a lovely sight.

Thursday 14th March 1895

The Dharmashala[65] where we had put up is a large quadrangular building with rooms all round for travellers. In the front portion of the building is an upper story with a furnished hall and sleeping apartments which are reserved for respectful gentlemen. We occupied this part of the building. The Dharmashala was built by the late Mr Gokuldas Tippal[?] of Bombay for the convenience of Hindu high caste pilgrims. We were very comfortable here.

Friday 15th March 1895

We left Allahabad at 3 p.m. On our way visited the Fort in which is one of the celebrated pillar[s] of Asoka. There is also in it a temple underground with the trunk of a sacred Banyan tree called Akshaya Veta[66] before which all pilgrims bow. The passage to it is narrow and dark and torches are required to see the way. For the pilgrims to enter there is a [+++] door to the Fort from the [+++] [river side].

Saturday 16th March 1895

At 2 in the morning reached Jubbalpore the junction of the C.I.R. [Central Indian Railways] and E.I.R. [Eastern Indian Railways] at 4 we started for the marble rocks 12 miles off. The road was excellent. Reached Bhera Ghaut at 7 and put up at a beautiful Travellers Bungalow overlooking the river which was rocky. Proceeded up the river in a pleasure boat to the rocks which formed its sides. They were very high and the scenery was grand. After breakfast walked a mile to see the 'Falls' which though not so big as some others we have seen, were well worth of a visit.

Sunday 17th March 1895

In the morning His Highness drove to the river five miles for a bath. We put up at a [+++] [serai] which looked like a stable though scrupulously clean and well kept. In the evening first visited the Lunatic Asylum with 111 male and 32 female inmates. There were a few ferocious looking criminal lunatics who were kept in strict confinement. The female wards were particularly interesting. Drove through the town which was neat and very crowded. There were two principal streets at the intersection on which was a fountain. At 9.30 p.m started for Nasik.

Monday 18th March 1895

In the morning at 7 broke journey at Itarsi for breakfast and at 9 resumed journey by the Mail. In the 2nd class carriage there was [*sic*] with us several passengers among whom was a Mahomedan of Gaya who was going to England to study for the Bar. His knowledge of English was very imperfect and I doubt if he would find it easy to attain his end. We passed the Tapti [River] near Burhampur while we were told [it] is an interesting town.

Tuesday 19th March 1895

At 12 o'clock midnight we reached Nasik Station where we were received by Mr Damodar Krishna of Chandri a second class Sirdar with a party of friends among whom was Ganesh Pandu Ranga Vidya who told us he had the honour of making arrangements for the Maharaja of Travancore when [he]

visited Nasik. Drove to the town 6 miles distance and put up at Radhakrishna on the Panchavati side of the river.

Wednesday 20th March 1895

There was very little water in the river and what there was had been made dirty by the washing of the whole town. We bathed in the river and worshipped at the shrines of which one was in a cave. Attended a pan-supari[67] given by Mr Vidiya the Government solicitor. In the town itself there is nothing of interest and beauty, except the river Godavari. We left at 1. p.m. for Bombay. The Ghaut scenery[68] is not so good as at Bhore Ghaut. Reached Bombay at 7 in the evening.

[No entry between 20th March and 5th April 1895]

Friday 5th April 1895

After 15 days' stay in Bombay to refresh ourselves from the fatigues of our journey we started homeward in the morning at 9.30 from the Victoria-Terminus where Messers Jagmohan Das, Vindravan Das, Kallian Das, Keshava Das, Bapuji, [+++], C. Ponnuswami Pillai and Settuchar with our factory staff were present to bid us good speed. The first two gentlemen were the members of the corporation [Jagmohan Das & Vrindavan Das] both having secured the largest number of votes in their respective wards in the last election.

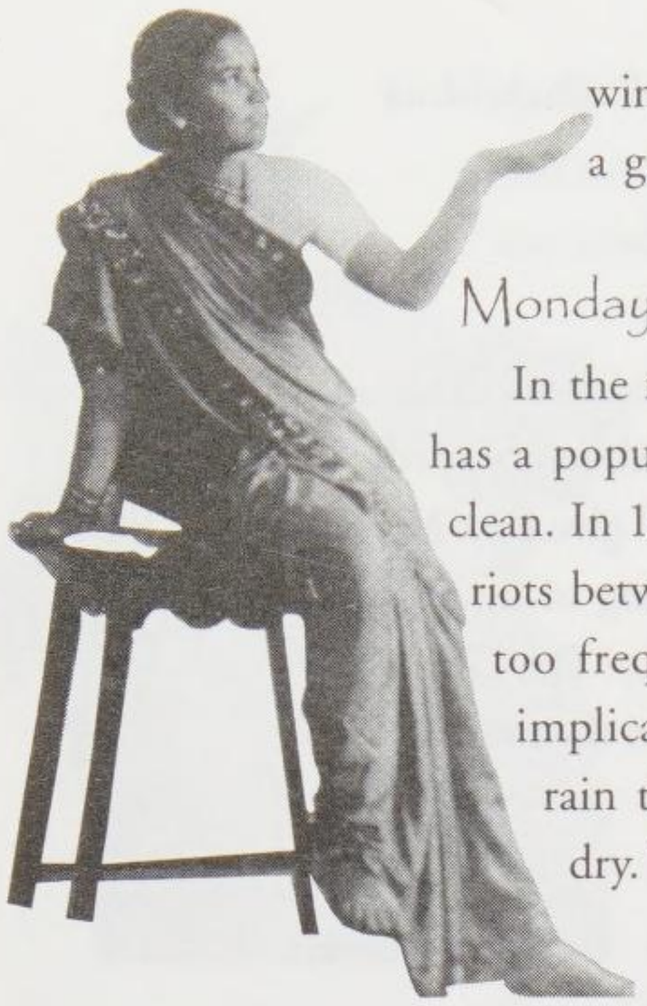
Saturday 6th April 1895

In the morning when we reached Sholapur the agent of the Morarji Gokul Das, spinning and weaving mill, waited upon His Highness and suggested His Highness to break journey at the station, but we could not comply with his request. At Shahabad Mr Narain Rao [+++] the brother of our friend Mr Bapuji and an Hyderabad official visited H.H. with fruits and flowers. Mr S.R. Ramaswami Iyengar Perartur[?] who had already been introduced to H.H. at Madras travelled with us from here to Wadi on his way to Hyderabad. We bore with the deepest sorrow of the death of Mr Grigg the British Resident.[69]

[+++] Intense heat. Heavy shower near Kristna.

Sunday 7th April 1895

Reached Arkonam early in the morning and were met by H.H's cousin Mr Rajagopalachariya, Krishnan Pandala, Govindan Tampi and others from Madras. After breakfast resumed journey by the passenger to Salem. The journey was not so tiresome as that of the previous day over the tableland of the Dekkan. We reached Salem at 6 and were received by Mr C. Vijayaraghavacharian, a leading pleader of the place with several others. Our residence was a nice bungalow near the station. There was a very high



wind blowing from the Shev[roy] Hills which tempered the heat to a great extent. The town of Salem is about 4 miles from the station.

Monday 8th April 1895

In the morning we drove with Mr Vijayaraghavachari to the town which has a population of 67,000 souls. Though small the town was neat and clean. In 1882 the peace of Salem was disturbed by one of those unfortunate riots between the Hindus and Mohamedans,[70] which of late have become too frequent all over [the] Empire. Our friend the pleader had been implicated in it. We returned home at about 10. Owning to want of rain there was scarcity of water and the wells and tanks being nearly dry. The sanatorium of [+++] only a short distance from here. All left by the passenger train at 6 p.m. Brother being left behind through severe illness.

Tuesday 9th April 1895

H.H. reached Tirur at 10.30 where he was received by Mr K.C. Manuvikraman Raja, Rama Varma, Purpunand Raja and several of the local officials. The young Raja had made arrangements in a right royal manner to make his distinguished guest happy. H.H. and party put up at a Kovilakam[71] belonging to the Zamorin.[72] H.H. spent the whole day indoors as there was nothing of interest in the place.

Wednesday 10th April 1895

In the morning H.H. paid a visit to Sri Kandyar[?] a temple about a mile off. At 11 myself and Brother joined H.H. at Tirur having left Salem the previous evening. After tiffin we started for Ponnani by water and reached the place before sun set where a reception as grand as at Tirur awaited H.H. at the invitation of Manavikrama Raja. After supper started for Guruvayur a most celebrated temple of Vishnu. At night Brother had a relapse.

Thursday 11th April 1895

Reached Guruvayur early in the morning where H.H. was received by our friend the Raja and his nephews. A grand procession was formed and we started for the residence set apart for H.H. H.H. bathed and worshipped at the temple. Brother arrived late very weak and in suffering. H.H. left at night for Kodangallur. Brother, cousin K.R.R. being left behind, the former having had symptoms of fever and cold. The Raja took leave at the landing place.

Friday 12th April 1895

Early in the morning reached Kodangallur where H.H. was the guest of the Raja's whose Tahsildar[73] Narasinha Iyer had made every arrangement. H.H.

visited the temple and dined with them. Of the Rajas of whom one was the young poet Kunju Kutten [*sic*]. The old Raja said he was a great traveller having visited the whole Hindustan on foot. At 2 started for Parur which was reached in the evening. H.H. being received by the Tahsildar, Inspector Krishna Pillai [and] Doctor.

Saturday 13th April 1895

On new year's day H.H. got up at day break and after having seen C [?] Kani presented H.H's servants the usual gift of money. H.H. took a walk to the old fort of which nothing remains but the ruined halls. After breakfast we started for Vykom which was reached in the evening. The Bolghatty Residence[74] reminded us of Mr Grigg, the late Resident. We left Vaikom after supper. We heard that our friend 'Moos' was unwell. Ramaswamy Iyer, Tahsildar was a great traveller.

Sunday 14th April 1895

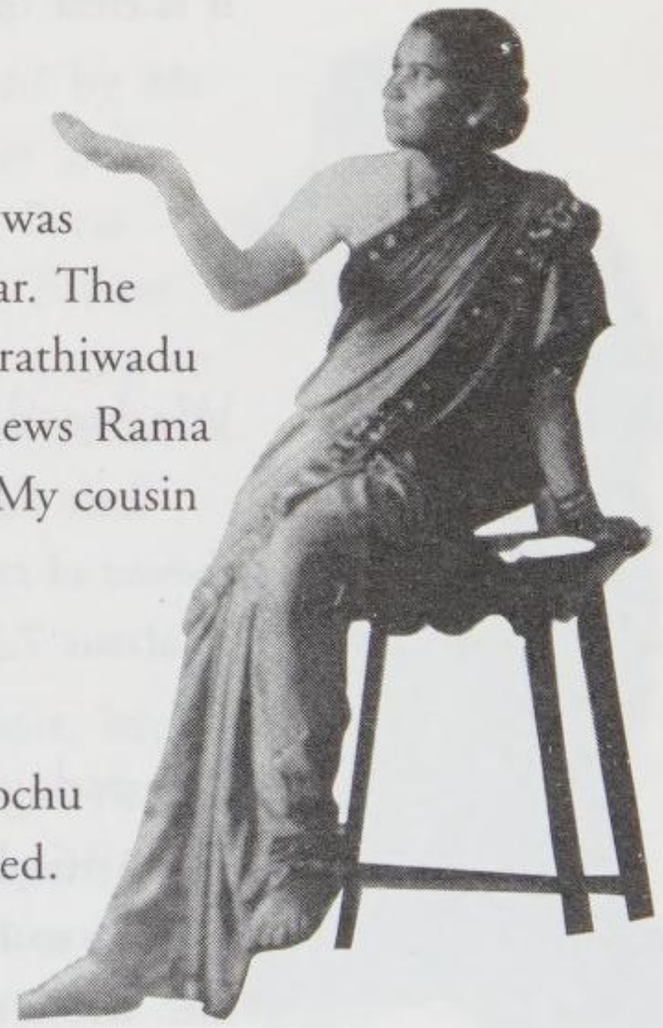
Reached Alleppy in the morning and H.H. was received by the local officials. Started at 12. Reached Mavelikara[75] very late as there was no water in the river. H.H's uncle Kunjaru Raja with the Tahsildar and others accorded H.H. a grand reception. H.H. put up at the new bungalow which was lately been [*sic*] finished. It was very late when we took our supper.

Monday 15th April 1895

In the morning H.H. held a levy when all the local officers [were] presented to H.H. In the afternoon H.H. paid a visit to the new Girl's School started under the auspices of Kunjaruraja where an address was presented to H.H. At night H.H. left Mavelikara for Quilon. Brother and cousin arrived just as we were leaving[.] The latt. [latter] very unwell.

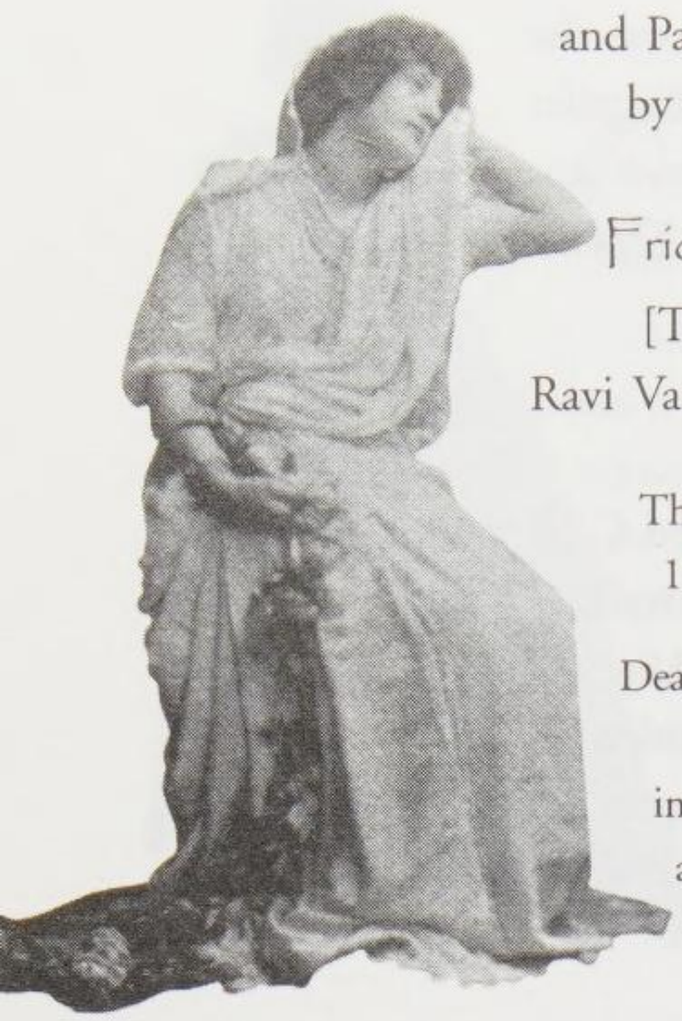
Tuesday 16th April 1895

In the morning at 9 reached Tevalli, Quilon, where H.H. was received by Mr Ferguson, Police Superintendent and the Tahsildar. The Pushkar[?] visited H.H. Started after breakfast. Reached Chanderathiwadu in the evening at 6.30. Received a cordial reception from nephews Rama Varma the Tahsildar and other officers. Left at 12 for Trivandrum. My cousin and nephew came from Kilimanur.[76]



Wednesday 17th April 1895

Reached the Trivandrum landing place at 7 o'clock where cousin Cochu Koil Thampuran with all H.H's. servants and dependents arrived. His Highness paid a visit—while passing—to the Senior Rani[77] at the gate of H.H's bangalow 'Sunder Vilas'. A triumph arch



and Pandal had been erected and suitably decorated. Here H.H. was received by all H.H's friends, servants and dependents.

Friday 19th April 1895

[The following is a translation of a letter in Portuguese language to Mr Ravi Varma sent by the G.d.C. of the Portuguese Governor General Goa:]

The Palace of Cabo
15th April 1894 [*sic*] [1895]

Dear Sir,

H.E. The Governor General directs me to convey to you his opinion on the Photo in oil that you have executed for him. H.E. finds that the Photo is exceedingly good and that you in executing it did not belittle the good reputation that you have raised for yourself by the salon of Bombay.

H.E. confesses himself enchanted with the work, admiring chiefly the correctness of the design and the exactness of the tone of the touches, exactness and correctness which he thinks unsurpassable. On my own part I have nothing to add to the high appreciation of H.E. I avail myself of the opportunity to request you to be good enough to send a memo of the cost of the Photo for which H.E. the Governor General has already enquired from me more then once.

[Sd.] Capt.
Gomes-de-Costi
G.d.C.

No diary is available between the years 1895 and 1898
1887 [*sic*] [1898]

[The memoranda for the year 1898 gives all the occurrences which here are mentioned for the year 1897. On account of this and other cross references it is clear that the following entries are of the year 1898]

1898

Wednesday 25th May 1898—Vaikasy 13

Left Kilimanur at 4.30 and arrived at Puvampara at about 6 in a heavy shower of rain. With great difficulty got into a boat and started for Trivandrum at about 7.30.

Thursday 26th May 1898—Vaikasy 14

Arrived at Trivandrum at about 7 in the morning—after bath paid my respects to H.H. The First Prince who kindly allowed me to take Venku[78] with me. Wrote two letters to the Dewan on the subject of the grant for next year

for the Art Gallery.[79] Paid my respect to H.H. the Senior Rani in the afternoon. Left Trivandrum for Tirunevelli [Tirunelveli] at about 8 in the evening.

Friday 27th May 1898—Vaikasy 15

Reached Olaganashery at about 10.30 a.m. River stagnant and dirty—bathed and took meals at the Chatrum. After a tedious journey reached Nangunery at about 10 at night but learnt that my nephew the Deputy Collector had not arrived owing to indispositions. A [+++] [quarrel occurred] between Ramaier and the Chathram keeper which was at last amicably settled. Since breakfast took nothing for the whole day except a cup of coffee.

Saturday 28th May 1898—Vaikasy 16

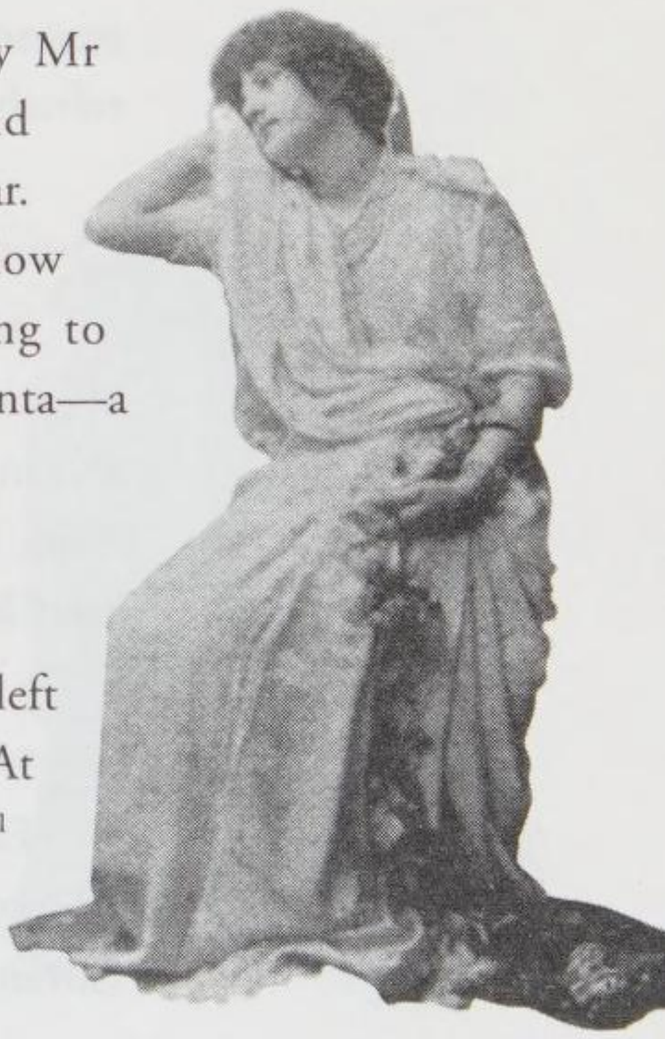
Arrived at Tirunelveli in the morning and put up at Jnanamani Chathram—Bathed in the river. In the evening drove to the Railway station. Sent the package containing Mr Brooks' Picture[80] and then drove to the town of Tirenevelly in a shower of rain. Returned to the Chathram about 5.30.

Sunday 29th May 1898—Vaikasy 17

Had an early bath in the Tambaraparni [River] and after breakfast took train at 9.30 a.m. as far as Madura, I had only one fellow passenger but at the latter place two fresh ones came one of whom alighted at [+++] and the other at Dindikal [Dindigul]. Reached Trichi junction at about 7 and from there had two or three travellers till morning. Until I passed Madura it was very hot. I observed great improvements on the line since I had last travelled it two years ago. I paid Rs 23-6- for one 2nd class and 2 third class tickets as far as Madras.

Monday 30th May 1898—Vaikasy 18

Reached Madras early this morning and was kindly received by Mr Rajagopalacharia. At 2 p.m. went to Higginbothams, Spencer and Moses's[?] Firm and returned home by way of the beach and China Bazar. Left Madras for [+++] [Bombay] by Mail Train at [+++] p.m. Fellow passengers [+++] a bad pleader, an European gentlemen [*sic*] going to Rajmundri as Deputy Collector and an other pleader going to Renigunta—a sharp shower at night.



Tuesday 31st May 1898—Vaikasy 19

The Hyderabad pleader Ms Govind Naick, a Mahratta by caste, left me at Raichur. In the afternoon, after I left Wadi the heat was intense. At Dhord [Daund] a doctor came and felt my pulse to see if I was plague[81] stricken; at Poona too I had to subject myself to the same examination but it was over in less than a second.

Wednesday 1st June 1898—Vaikasy 20

At about 1 a.m. reached [+++] [Ghatkopar?] and was met by Schlicker [Schleicher].[82] We remained at the waiting room till 4 when the train for Poona took us back to Karli. Girhardt [Gerhardt][83] received me at their small bungalow prettily situated overlooking the railway station. Wrote letters to H.H. 1st Prince and Cousin. Wired to Shriram [Pant] to come up. The evening was very cool and pleasant.

Thursday 2nd June 1898

Shriram Pant arrived early in the morning. We took a walk to the Bhaji village and then went up the hill to see the caves,[84] which are smaller than those of Karli. One of them contains figures which resemble Malayali women with long ears. Discussed matters connected with the press. In the evening walked to the Karli village and was very much pleased with the grove of trees. It was very thick and cool and shady.

Friday 3rd June 1898—Vaikasy 22

At 1 o'clock went by train to see Govardhan Das. He received me kindly and promised to settle matters on Monday when we met in Bombay. He was willing to take his share and retire from the business. I returned to Karli in a tonga and sent a telegram to His Highness that it was not necessary for us to borrow money at Trivandrum. The subordinate judge of Sarat [+++] called in the evening and we had a long conversation on art.

Saturday 4th June 1898—Vaikasy 23

In the morning wrote a letter to H.H. the Prince & Cousin K.R.R. regarding my interview with Mr Govardhan Das. In the evening Messers [+++] Shriram and myself went to the house of Bhow Sahib in the Bhaji village in respond [*sic*] to an invitation for a pan supari in my honour. There were refreshments consisting of fruits and coffee. Shriram left for Bombay at night.

Sunday 5th June 1898

After coffee in the morning I walked to Dr Balachandra's Bungalow, a mile off and consulted him on the subject of our business—at 11.30 p.m. Gerhardt and myself left Karli for Bombay. Dr B. [Balachandra] also travelled by the same train. Bhow Sahib who is a quite [*sic*] young man and who had rendered me great help, saw me off. I was Mr [+++]'s [Govardhan Das'] guest at Karli.

Monday 6th June 1898—Vaikasy 25

Early in the morning I awoke and found we had reached Dadar. At V.T. [Victoria Terminal] we were all examined and allowed to get out. Put up at Govardhan Das's. Visited the Press. No printing going on, Girhardt [Gerhardt]

about to finish and Gnan is at work at 4 pictures. In the afternoon Haribhai came having heard of my arrival from Bapuji who had come in the morning. Towards evening went to Appolo Bunder and met Mr Rustomji, Patel and N.V. Mandlik.

Tuesday 7th June 1898

Early this morning called on Ms R.M. Patel accompanied by Bapuji, asked his advice on the subject in dispute. In the evening went to the 'Fort' and on my return went to Mr Bapuji's and with him called on Ms Jaymohan Das Bhaist at Bhuleshwar. We all came together to my residence. Ms Jaymohan Das was of opinion it was better to sever our connection with Govardhan Das, since this partnership causes a great deal of trouble.[85]

Wednesday 8th June 1898

In the morning went out to Chaupati for a walk [+++] came down from [+++] [Govardhan Das']; had talk with him. [+++] was present. He wanted 34,000 as the value of his share. Nothing settled. In the evening called on him again with Mr Bapuji, but as he was returning to [+++] could settle nothing. Went to Kaustala Hill to see Mr D.H. Wadia. We talked over the matter. He was of opinion that I should settle something for the pictures and continue as a partner of Govardhan Das, as the management of the Press singly would be difficult.

Thursday 9th June 1898

The whole of the morning and afternoon spent at home. In the evening went to Ramchandra [+++] and returned home with Bapuji. Visited Govardhan Das and settled dispute thus: He should either accept Rs 22,000 and leave the Press to us or pay us Rs 30,000 and keep it to himself. He promised to give a reply on Saturday. [+++] His refusal to pay us any remuneration for past work caused me no little surprise and anger.

Friday 10th June 1898—Vaikausi 29

In the evening Shriram and myself got into the train at Charu Road Station and alighted at Grand Road Church Gate but as it began to rain we had to walk as far as Flora Fountain and got into the tram and returned.

Met Ganpath Rao, Photographer, and Mangesh Rao in the tram. Damodar sent up accounts to Lanouli [Lonavla] for Govardhan Das to decide which of the two courses proposed he should accept.

Saturday 11th June 1898

I was looking over the accounts with Damodar in the morning Purushotham Rao paid me a visit. In the morning went to the market

and purchased a few necessary articles such as strips for bedding, pillow covers and at night visited the Superate[?] Theater with Bapuji, Anand and a friend of the latter's. Some parts of the play were good. It was called 'Pushpasin' the name of the hero. Mr Mulray was present and we had a talk regarding the press.

Sunday 12th June 1898—Vaikansy 31

Paid a visit to Dr Balachandra. He thinks Dr Mathai had better begin private practice rather than enter into service. In the afternoon came Bapuji, Haribhan, Purushotham Rao [+++] and Sampat Rao, photographer. The evening being rainy, did not go out. Shriram Pant who had gone to Karli returned. Received the[?] letter from Govardhan Das as he had promised about his decision.

Monday 13th June 1898—Vaikausy 32

In the morning though it was rainy called on Mr Bhaijivanji and asked his advice and returned home. Mr Govardhan Das did not return from Lanouli [Lonavla]. Owing to wet weather I had to remain in-doors the whole of the afternoon and evening. Wrote two letters, one to H.H. the First Prince and the other to my nephew Ravi Varma, Deputy Collector, whose letter I received the previous day.

Tuesday 14th June 1898—Auny 1

The day very rainy and therefore could not go out with Shriram Pant to make certain purchases. Wrote letters in the afternoon to Mr Ferguson, to Dr Bishan Das Jumna (in reply to his letter why we did not visit Cashmere as promised) and to the Travancore Sirkar agent—After night fall Shriram Pant showed me the new gas lamp[86] he has ordered over from Germany. It gives a steady, brilliant light and will be of use in those places where gas is not available.

Wednesday 15 th June 1898—Auny 2

Ms Govardhan Das returned from Lonavli. There was no break in the weather which continued wet and rainy. Haribhan came in the afternoon. At about 7 in the evening Bapuji and myself called Govardhan Das whether we were to keep the press or he. It was settled one year's time should be allowed for payments and interest should be charged at the rate of 6 per cent. He promised to give a decided reply as to we or he should keep the Press tomorrow, and we left.

Thursday 16th June 1898

In the afternoon we got a glimpse of the Sun and I went to Tarapurawala's and D.B. Dinshaw's. [+++] The former to send to my brother this year's [+++]

[Royal Academy] Pictures.[87] At night Bapuji and I went to Govardhan Das and finally settled that we were to keep the press and pay him Rs 22,000 in a year's time at 6 percent interest. I was glad at the termination of the dispute; Bapuji promised to draft the deed.

Friday 17th June 1898—Auny 3

In the afternoon went first to Messers Thacker & Co and bought one stylographic pen and then [+++] on night return called on Bapuji to know if he had prepared the draft. Went to Mr Bhaig [+++] who promised to make a draft of the deed of separation. At Mr Bapuji's I met Dr Dhurandhar of the Baroda Medical Services. He told me Ms Sitharam[88] [++++] has gone to Tanjore.

Saturday 18th June 1898

In the morning there was some dispute about the price of the share[?] [+++] presented for Govardhan Das. Nothing settled. Sent two parcels one to Rajagopalchariya and the other containing paintings to Sirkar agent. In the afternoon went to the market and made some purchases. On my return I found Bapuji waiting for me with the draft. Govardhan Das took it away to be shown to his pleader before he signed it.

Sunday 19th June 1898—Auny 6

In the morning Ms Govardhan called me and said that Ms [+++] had insulted him. I tried to pacify him but to no purpose. He sent for [+++] and though [+++] a scene both controlled their temper. Govardhan Das had added one or two clauses to the document which were objectionable. In the afternoon Mr Bapuji and I went to him and told him about it. He agreed to remove them and insert [*sic*] that the money should be paid in three installments in a year.

Monday 20th June 1898

Called on Ms Shivaji, Dharmji who appeared to be quite changed. His son's death seems to haunt him constantly. At 2 p.m. I went to [+++] office but I was told that the documents won't be ready for signature that day. Ms Govardhan Das left for Calcutta at night. I found I had no alternative but to prolong my stay for a fortnight more.

Tuesday 21st June 1898

In the morning went for a walk in Chaupatti. In the afternoon Mr [+++], Shriram Pant and myself paid a visit to Anant Shivaji Desai's shop[89] and selected a few of the German pictures[90] most liked by the public. Went to Colaba by tram and returned home by train. Ramchandra told me that the harmonium had been sent on Monday.

Wednesday 22nd June 1889—Auny 9

In the evening at about 5 o'clock we went to see the plot of ground behind Mr Bhaijivanramji's house and we liked it for building a new press. Drove from there to Apollo Bundar. Met Mr [+++] of Ahmedabad. Came walking to the Church Gate Station, but as the train had already arrived, returned home by tram. Learnt Bapuji had called while I was out.

Thursday 23rd June 1898

As the varnishing machine was at work had to spend the afternoon at Ms [+++] bungalow. Rajibai[91] came to see me at 3.30 with her infant son, and told me the particular[s] of her mother's death. She wanted her father's portrait which we had painted three years ago. In the evening went out for a walk to Chowpatti and on my way back was overtaken by a shower.

Friday 24th June 1898

At about 1 p.m. went to Sarupar and asked him to send 'Lambs' Tales' and 'Gulliver's Travels' which I gave them to be sent by post to Mavelikara to my brother.[92] Next visited Messers Thacker & Cos and bought varnish and brush and a copy of the 'Artist'.[93] Varnished Rajibai[s] portrait and that of her father's. Mr Bapuji came with Mulji Bai of the Dramatic Co, and we made an [+++] to go next night to see 'Viratamaya' [+++] of the [+++] company.

Saturday 25th June 1898

As Bapuji wished very much to see Rajibai I sent word to her to come next day. At night we went to the 'New Alfred' Grant Road to see 'Virat Maya' a new play. Singing of [+++] and [+++] especially of the principal female character was very good. The former sometimes forgot (in his effort to sing well) that he was acting a[t] great fault. At about 1 I returned with Bapuji, who went home after dropping me at my place.

Sunday 26th June 1898

In the morning as usual Mr [+++] came to see me. At 2 p.m. Rajibai called and Mr Bapuji had a conversation with her on their domestic affairs. We went at 3 p.m. to the Novelty to see the Urdu rendering of 'Hamlet' by a Parsee Company. The acting of Hamlet was very powerful and the singing of Ophelia was sweet. The scene arrangements were excellent. Towards 4 o'clock a heavy rain commenced lasting through-out the night.

Monday 27th June 1898

In the morning as usual went out for a walk. Wrote letters to H.H. the first Prince and K.R.R.. Took a walk to Chowpatti in the evening. In the night

called on R. Ju [+++] who told me that Govardhan Das won't return on Thursday evening; that Mr [+++] had not yet gone through the draft and that he would try to get it the next day when he went to the Fort.

Thursday 28th June 1898—Auny 15

A Parsee from the Income Tax Collector's Office came with a [+++] warrant to attach the press property as income tax which they had calculated at 300 had not been paid. This amount with Rs 15 as fine was to be realized if not paid. He was sent away with a request to come after a week as we wanted to explain [to the] Income Tax Collector the real state of the Press. In the evening called on Bhaijivanji and had a talk about the future management of the Press.

Wednesday 29th June 1898—Auny 16

The whole day remained at home painting the bust of a Hindu Lady. In the evening went to Chowpatti for a walk. Before supper Damodar came and was telling me about the state of matters in the Press which he said was not conducted in a business like manner and that we should [+++] [do a] better supervision.

Thursday 30th June 1898

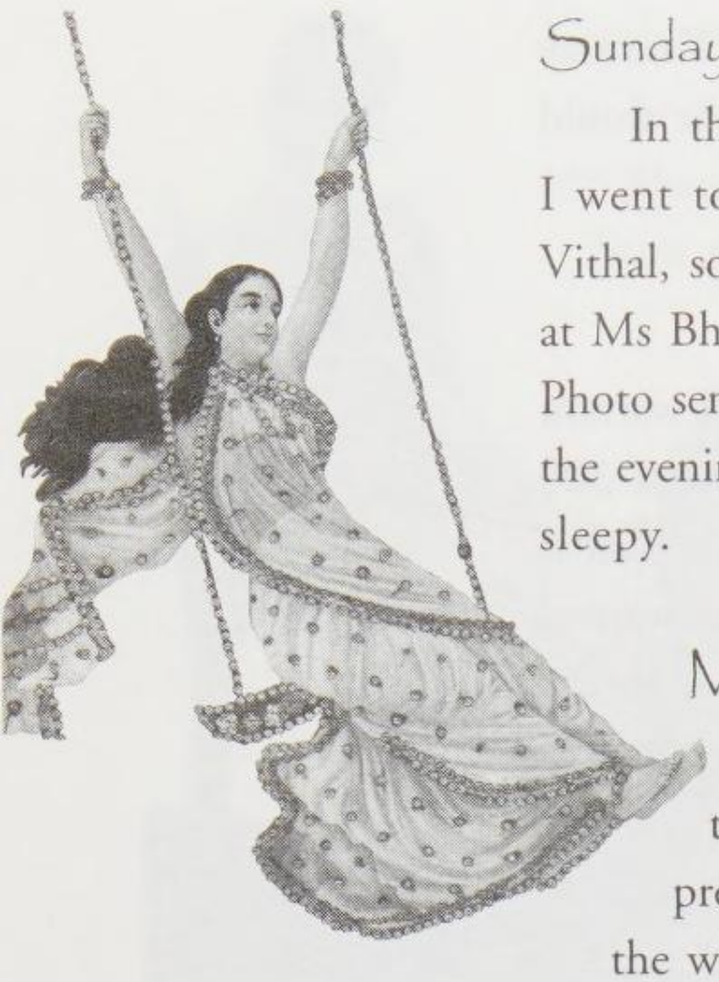
In the afternoon at 2 went first to Messers Ramchandla[?] Bros and then to Ms Bapuji's house where he could not be found. Govardhan Das returned from Calcutta in the evening. Made certain improvements in my picture. The evening being wet I did not go out.

Friday 1st July 1898

Called on Govardhan Das in the morning. He said that the draft would be got ready in the course of the day. In the afternoon went to the Criminal Session High Court. A European named Paiker[?] was charged with causing hurt to a native woman of Poona. Next to the temple at Kahoredwar with Mr Bapuji to hear a Hare Kirtan. Despatched Albam [album] to His Highness and bought some chemicals for Ithammar.[94]

Saturday 2nd July 1898

Owning to rain did not go out the whole day. In the evening Bapuji came and proposed to go to Mahamudally's play 'Harischandra' at the Royal Theater, Grant Road. The scenery was gorgeous and the performance which resembled Mr Bali [+++] to a great extent was good. We came away at 12 o'clock.



Sunday 3rd July 1898—Auny 20

In the morning I got the draft which [contained] Mr [+++]'s corrections. I went to Mr Bapuji with Shriram Pant and got it altered by Sham [+++] Vithal, solicitor and friend of Bapuji. Heavy rains: On my way back alighted at Ms Bhaijivanji's and told him about [the] draft, Haribai came with Nari's[?] Photo sent by Keser[?] to be printed. Ponnuswamy also called. Bapuji came in the evening with the draft but could not see Govardhan Das as he said he was sleepy.

Monday 4th July 1898—Auny 21

Called on Govardhan Das with Bapuji at 8 a.m. and told him that the draft as corrected by his solicitor was objectionable and proposed as an alternative to add that if I failed to pay the 1st instalment the whole amount becomes due at once. He agreed. But in the evening he said that his solicitor will have nothing but his own terms. Visited Jaymohan Das and Dr Balachandra to ask their advice.

Tuesday 5th July 1898—Auny 22

Dr Mathai arrived in the morning. He appeared to be quite dejected and hopeless. In the evening visited Dr Balachandra with Mathai. He kindly promised to secure the money to pay off Govardhan Das to whose terms he said I should not agree. He advised Mathai to send an application to the municipal commissioner for advice in connection with the [+++]

Wednesday 6th July 1898

Since Monday I have been very uneasy owing to Govardhan Das's attitude. In the morning went to Bapuji with Mathai for drawing up an application for the latter. In the evening called again on Balachandra to know if he could help me. He told me he would let me know the next day. Ms Jaymohan Das came in the evening and told me he could not succeed in raising the loan for me.

Thursday 7th July 1898

An extremely anxious morning. Did not know what to do as according to Shriram the Doctor seemed to be doubtful of giving any help. In the evening called on Ms Vishnu Pant—Doctor's brother—who promised to stand security in case the money could not be raised.

Friday 8th July 1898

Early in the morning called on Dr B. [Balachandra]. He promised definitely either to find the money for me [or] stand security. Mind greatly relieved. In

the evening went with Pillai to Bhaijivanji and he advised me to propose to put the whole thing to auction, as Govardhan Das never came to terms. Wrote letters to His Highness and Brother.

Saturday 9th July 1898

Remained at home the whole day. Wrote one letter to Mr Mansukram, Purajitram Tripati regarding the order for the painting of the Junagada Nawabs'[95] contracts. Did a little bit of painting. The evening very warm and cloudy.

Sunday 10th July 1898

In the morning went to Malabar Hill on a visit to Mr Karim [+++] who as usual [+++] at my disposal. I requested him to send me an ivory painting [painting on ivory] of Delhi to study muselman dress. Bapuji came in the evening and we remained talking till night. A pan-supari was given in honour of Ms Narain Rao.

Monday 11th July 1898

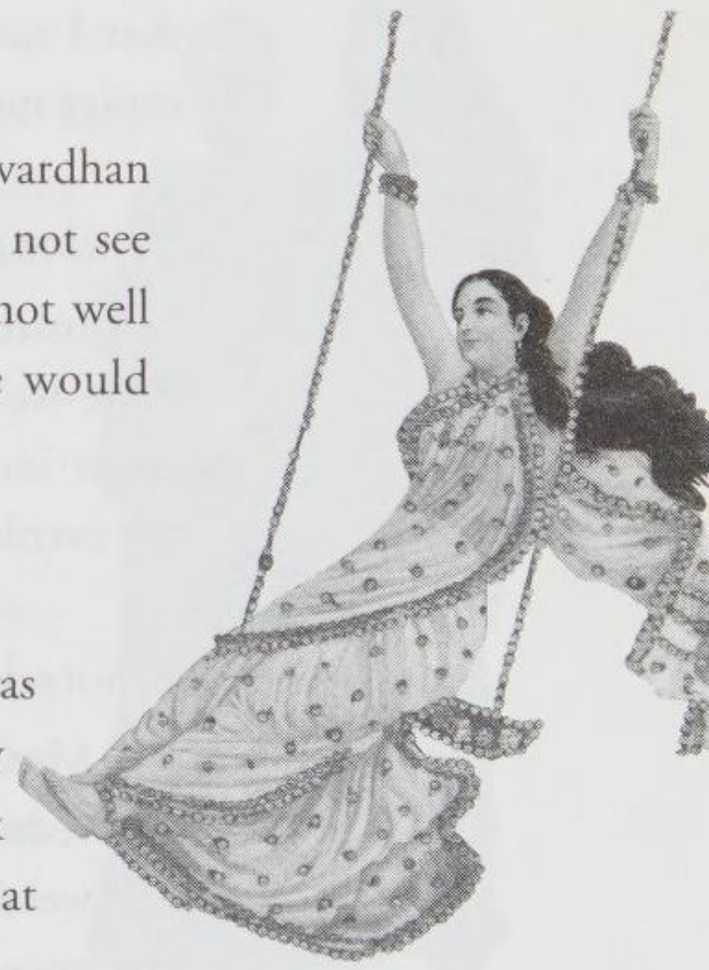
Shriram saw Mr Narain Rao in the morning, he said he was going out of Bombay and on his return he would secure the amount for me. Dr Balachandra whom I visited in the evening told me the same thing and asked me to get the document and [+++] by the time Narain Rao returns.

Tuesday 12th July 1898

Mr Govardhan Das returned from Poona. I sent Damodar to tell him that I don't wish any more to be his guest as I have enjoyed his hospitality for more than a month. He agreed to it. I made arrangements for making my own provisions.

Wednesday 13th July 1898

The day was raining and wet. I made up my mind to tell Mr Govardhan Das to sell the Press if he does not make any concession. But I could not see him as Mr Bapuji did not come. Mr G. sent word to me that I was not well advised in instituting [+++] proceedings against [+++] and said he would have no hand in it as they were his friends.



Thursday 14th July 1898—Auny 31

In the morning called on Mr Bapuji who, being Ekadasi day, was performing pooja. When he finished I told him to come over to my place at night. We both called on Mr G. and finding that he stuck fast to his terms proposed to sell everything. He agreed to it though at heart he was opposed to it on account of the loss he would suffer.

Friday 15th July 1898—Audy 1

In the morning called on Dr B; but he being away visited his brother and told him all about my previous night's interview. He advised me not to press the matter of auction too far as afterwards I might find it difficult to withdraw. In the evening went to Mr Bapuji's house and sat conversing for a long time. Wrote to His Highness requesting extension of leave to Venku.

Saturday 16th July 1898—Audy 2

As Mr G. wanted to see me I called on him and told him that on reconsideration I have given up the idea of putting the press in auction and resolved to pay his share and get myself free. Being very rainy remained in-doors.

Sunday 17th July 1898—Audy 3

Wet weather still continues. Could not get out. In the evening Mr Ponnuswamy Pillai called and we sat conversing till about 7 a.m.. He promised to find for the Doctor a house in [+++] for about Rs 30 per mensem.

Monday 18th July 1898—Audy 4

This morning called on Mr Ponnuswamy with doctor [+++] and saw the house. We preferred the 2nd floor. In the afternoon went first to Ms D.B [+++] and found the gilt frames nearly ready. Next purchased brushes at Hussainally's and a pair of boots at Faidlaw[?] and [+++] atnd[?] returned home at 4.

Tuesday 19th July 1898—Audy 5

After my noon day meal I devoted 2 or 3 hours in making a list of portion of the stock of pictures which were in bundles of 144 each. Shriram told me that I need not count Ganga's Descent[96] just then as there were a thousand copies more than entered in the account book.[97] This was suspicious.

Wednesday 20th July 1898

In the morning we called on Ms Bapuji—I mean Dr and myself. From there we went to Dr Triloki as Doctor Mathai wished to learn something about inoculation. He promised to let us know when cases come to him. In the evening we went to Chowpathi for a walk.

Thursday 21st July 1898—Audy 7

Mr Govardhan Das left in the morning for Poona. He said he would return on Wednesday and before that he would ask Mr Craigi to prepare the release. The weather was wet and therefore remained at home the whole day. Dr Mathai and myself used to talk in the evenings when we were alone about our ill-luck.

Friday 22nd July 1898—Audy 8

It began to rain very early in the morning and continued the whole day without interruptions. At night I went to Dr Balachandra's, but he was absent and so visited his brother and told him that I was depending on them for money. Mr Narain Rao has returned and therefore I hoped there will be no delay.

Saturday 23rd July 1898—Audy 9

Bapuji came in the morning and proposed to go in the evening to Bellasia Road to see the fair in connection with the Nagpanchami.[98] In the evening we went by tram to the fair but it was nothing grand and so returned home soon. At night Mr Jaymohan Das Bharsit[?] came accompanied by a native of Benaras who wished to get a [+++] [license?] for our pictures in Hindustan.

Sunday 24th July 1898

In the evening Shriram, Dr and myself went first to Shivaji's house [+++], but his wife said he had just gone out, then went by tram to Crawford Market via Bhindy Bazar and Py[?] [+++] hoping at the same time to be able to find out a residence for Dr Mathai. Returned home before 7.30.

Monday 25th July 1898

In the morning called again at Shivaji and he suggested that Dr would do well and apply for the family Doctor's place in Ms Nanabhai Byaram's house. In the afternoon Dr went to Mr [+++] N.B. with an application for the place. I went to Babulinath being a sacred day. There was an immense crowd of worshippers going to and returning from the temple. I gave up the idea in despair.

Tuesday 26th July 1898

At 1 p.m. went to Rao Bahadur Narain Rao's house. He told me he has arranged between himself and Dr B for Rs 11,000 but for the remaining 7000 there was some difficulty. At last he promised to try again if he can get the amount I returned home. In the evening Shriram brought Manishankar and Damodar Katans.

Wednesday 27th July 1898

Dr and myself went to Fort in the evening. We parted at the Flora Fountain, he going to the High Court to see Ms Turner about his lodgings, and I went to Govardhan Das's office and told Ms Mulraj and Dwarak Das to try to get the release ready before Friday. Next I met Dr near the fountain and went to [+++] shop to buy links[?] and pillow cases.

Thursday 28th July 1898—Audy 14

Schleicher [+++] and Girhardt [Gerhardt] went in the morning to Karli for a change. I went to the market in the afternoon and thence to the Fort where I gave my watch to be repaired to R. Langner, Watchmaker and returned home via market. Doctor went to Shivaji's house to ask if he could find out suitable lodging for him, but returned unsuccessful.

Friday 29th July 1898—Audy 15

This morning I called on Dr Balachandra and he told me that the whole amount I wanted is ready and whenever I require it he would pay. In the afternoon I called first on Ms Loundy[?] and sent H.H. one music book as it was difficult to make a selection. At Whiteaway and Laidlaw's, I bought a pillow, shirt and in the evening two detectives called on me and asked me if I could give them any information about one Shriram Sashtri who swindled some people at Vizagapatnam and Cumbakonam saying he was a graduate and so on.

Saturday 30th July 1898

This morning I went to Govardhan Das and introduced Dr to him. He said he would prepare release at once and enable me to leave on Tuesday when he himself intended going either to Calcutta or Bangalore. Went to Shivaji's. [Before going to Shivaji's went to Jacob circle by tram, but it was difficult to find any road without a doctor]. Went to Shivaji's house and visited the house for the doctor but it was dirty and so had to give up. Returned home at 6.

Sunday 31st July 1898—Audy 17

In the afternoon I received a visit from Rajibai and Laxmibai who came to take leave of me having heard I was leaving on Wednesday. Mr Govardhan Das promised to let the release [be] ready anyhow tomorrow. Called on Dr Balachandra in the evening. Pillai Doctor and I went to Apollo Bunder for a walk. Bapuji came at night.

Monday 1st August 1898—Audy 18

Narat[?] Purnima.[99] The streets of Bombay and the sea-shore thronged by crowd[?] of gaily attired people. There was a fair opposite the Municipal Office. I went to see it with Kasi; but the crowd was so great that I had to return without seeing much of it. At night I got the drafts at last.

Tuesday 2nd August 1898—Audy 19

Early in the morning I went to Mr Bapuji and next to Bai Jivanji who proposed certain alterations. It was approved by us and signed in the evening

at Ms Craigi's Office. I paid Rs 8000 the remaining to be paid in a day or two and a copy of the deed to be got. Dr Balachandra gave me the amount.

Wednesday 3rd August 1898—Audy 20

In the morning having heard that Ms Schleicher and others had lost several of their clothes and that they suspected Dr Mathai's servant, his room was searched and the whole of the stolen property recovered. He was at once turned out. In the evening called on Ms Narain Rao and told him to get me the remaining sum soon.

Thursday 4th August 1898

In the morning went to Bellasiar Road to look for lodgings for Mathai. We secured good rooms on the 2nd floor of a house. The first floor was occupied by Govinda a Jain of Cannanore and a native of Nagercoil. Both were employed in Bombay. Together with Narain Rao called at the office of Mr Dikshit—solicitor—and arranged about the document for the money lent by Dr Balachandra.

Friday 5th August 1898

In the morning went to Bapuji's, but not at home. In the evening went to the Fort made some purchases and saw Mr Dikshit about the document to get ready for signing by tomorrow after-noon. I returned home via market. Received a telegram from H.H. Bapuji called at night. Made every arrangement for starting tomorrow by Mail.

Saturday 6th August 1898

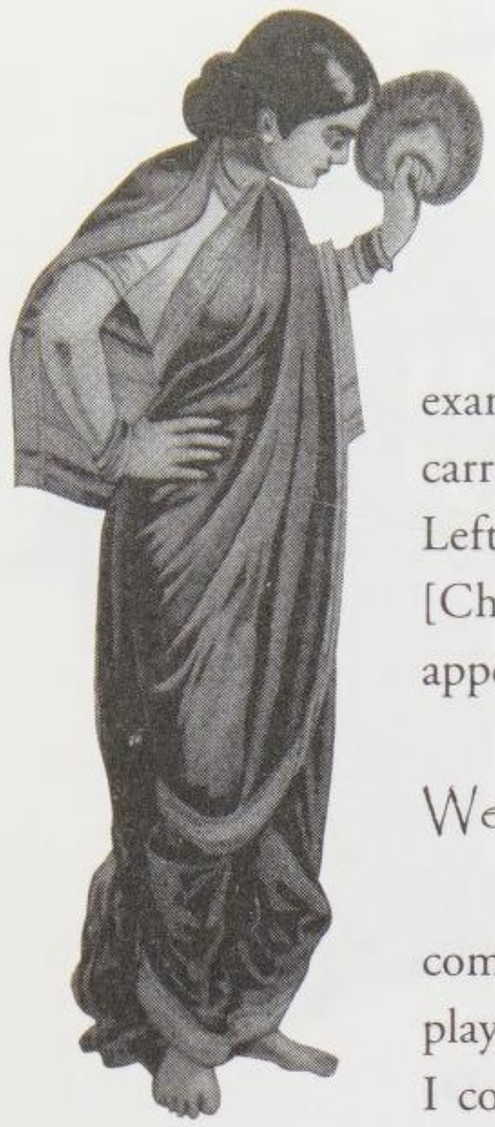
In the afternoon at 2 went to Mr Dikshit's office and signed the document with Dr Balchandra. Ms Narain Rao promised to pay the remaining sum to Craigi and complete the transaction on Monday. I left Bombay by Mail-train. There were present at the station Ms Jaimohan Das, Bapuji, Ponnaswami, Schleicher, Guan, Shriram Pant, his brother and Damodar.

Sunday 7th August 1898—Audy 24

At Sholapur a doctor examined my pulse, at night nobody troubled me, though my servants were examined in four different places. Arrived at Shahabad at 11.30 a.m. and was kindly received by Narain Rao Devanathji. In the evening visited the stone quarries. There is nothing else worth seeing in this place.

Monday 8th August 1898

Left Shahabad by Mail at [+++] we were examined and again at Raichur and Tungabhadra, at which last station all those who had come



direct from Bombay were detained. But my name and destination were taken down. The weather till now was rainy and cool.

Tuesday 9th August 1898

Reached Archonam [Arconam] at 4 a.m. and the Doctor having examined us went away locking the compartment I was in. I was therefore carried as far as Peratopur where I got down and returned by the next train. Left Archonam in the evening and changed to the fast mail at Chengalpet [Chingleput]. There were two European fellow passengers one of whom appeared to be an Italian. The heat was intense.

Wednesday 10th August 1898

We reached Trichinopolly [Tiruchirupalli] from where I was alone in my compartment. A military band was in attendance at the station and began to play as soon as the train steamed into the station, but in whose honour it was I could not make out. Tirnevelly [Tirunelvely] was reached at about 5. I was dissuaded from going to Trivandrum at night as Maravars[100] were on the prowl.

Thursday 11th August 1898—Audy 28

At 4 in the morning I left the place and arrived at [+++] near Valliyur for break-fast, which I took in a small temple on the bank of the tank. I arrived at Nagacoil and was the guest of Ms K.P. Shankara Menon, Judge. I left after supper but could not sleep owing to bugs in the [+++] transit carriage I was riding in.

Friday 12th August 1898—Audy 29

Early I reached Kulitharai and after breakfast I started for Trivandrum. The water in the river was very clear and I enjoyed my bath. Trivandrum was reached at about 6 in the evening and I was very glad to see my relations and friends again.

Memoranda from 1898

The plague having broken out in Bombay about the close of 189 [+++] and my brother Ravi Varma having been obliged to stay at home to perform the Diksha of our beloved uncle who died about the same time at the age of 81 mourned by the whole village of Kilimanur, we could not visit Bombay for two years. The supervision rested with Ms Govardhan Das Khatau but a disagreement having arisen between us I started for Bombay about the end of May. After a protracted discussion it was settled that we should pay him Rs 22,000 and take possession of the concern. There was some difficulty in finding the money but Doctor Balachandra Krishna kindly came to our help and advanced the money. Rao Bahadur Narain Das also gave us great help as he

contributed part of the money on favorable terms. The money was paid and the deed of separation signed. I returned home early in August. My father who was stricken with paralysis arrived at Kilimanur some time before my return. In November H.H. the first Prince who had been touring in Northern Travancore met with [a] riding accident which unfortunately fractured his left arm. I met the Prince at Tanniomukkam and travelled up to Quillon. On the 22nd December—On the prince's return to Trivandrum, My brother, his second son and myself started for Bombay. We reached Karli on the night of the 27th. I went to Bombay the next day with my nephew. Lord Curzon, the new Viceroy arrived on 30th morning. At night there was a reception at the Government House at which I was present. The plague showed signs of increasing. Dr Mathai who had secured temporary service was glad to meet us.

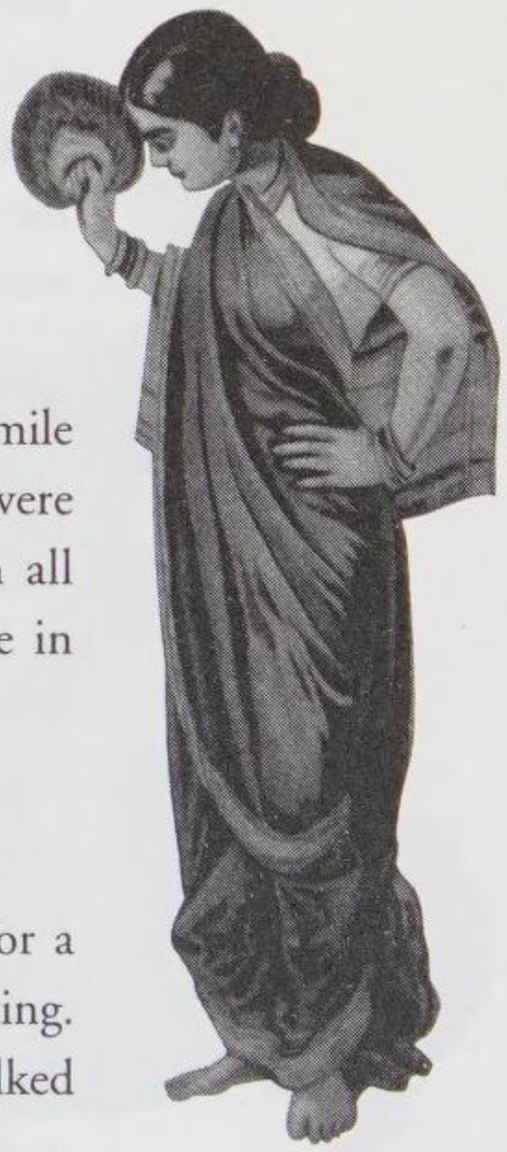
1899

Sunday 1st January 1899

I left Bombay with my nephew for Karli by the 7.40 a.m. train. There was plague examination at Kalyan and I was afraid for Narain but he escaped. Reached Karli at 12.30 p.m. Schlucker [*sic*] [Schleicher] left for Bombay at the same train. In the evening walked to Karli village with brother and Shriram.

Monday 2nd January 1899

Before sunrise walked to the village of Patan embedded in a valley. Next wrote letters to H.H. the Prince. My wife and my nephew Ithammar. Worked on my picture in the afternoon. After Coffee walked to the little village of Bhaji. The whole day was exceedingly cold.

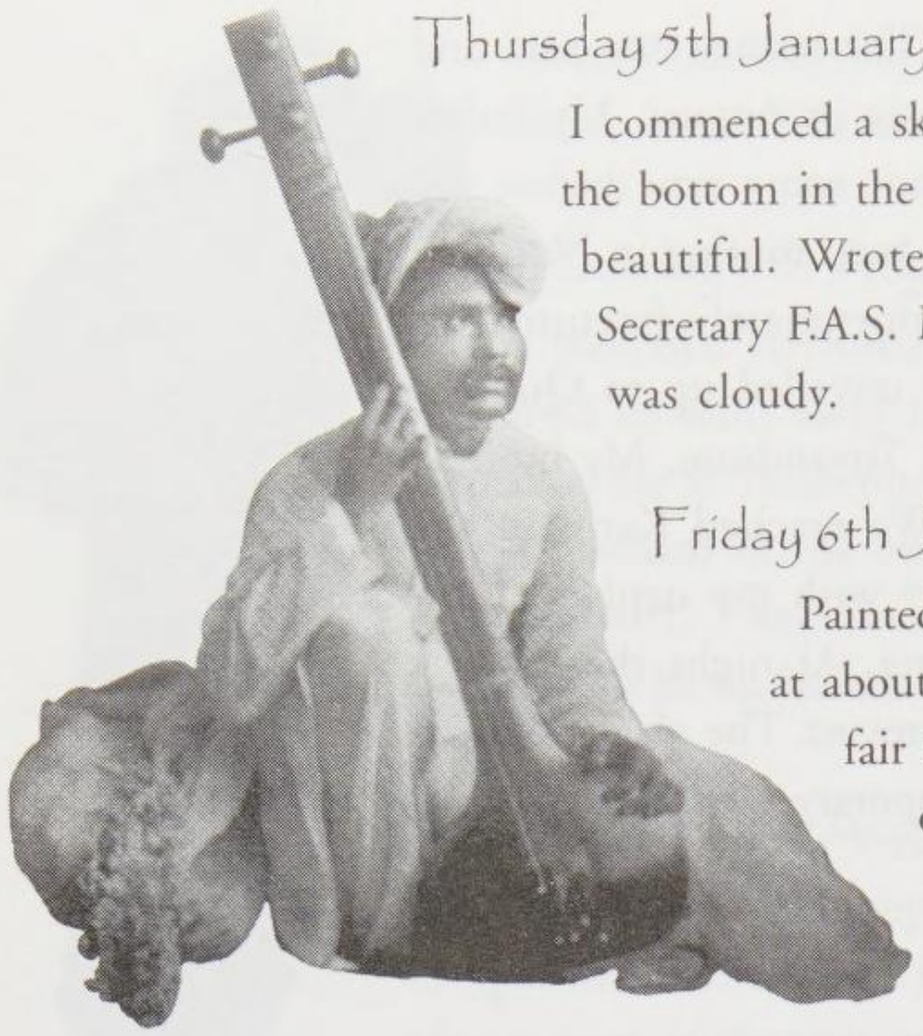


Tuesday 3rd January 1899

Early in the morning we went up the Lohgadhu Hill Fortress about a mile from home. It took about an hour and a half to go up the hill. There were beautiful [+++] [sceneries?] of gates temples and tanks. The scenery on all sides were grand. At night after supper there was a Tamasha performance in our tent, two boys dressed as women danced and sung.

Wednesday 4th January 1899

Early in the morning I walked to Bhaji to find out a bit of scenery for a landscape. The afternoon I spent between reading the 'Advocate' and painting. When the day's work was over we went up the hill behind us and then walked down to the Railwaystation and back again home.



Thursday 5th January 1899

I commenced a sketch of the Lohgadh Hill and the Bhaji [Village] at the bottom in the morning. By the morning sun the landscape looked beautiful. Wrote letters to cousin K.R.R.V., [and] the Honorary Secretary F.A.S. Madras. Took a walk to Patan in the evening which was cloudy.

Friday 6th January 1899

Painted the foreground in my landscape and returned home at about 9. In the evening we went to Karli Village where a fair is held on Fridays. The fair was poor and the crowd of people assembled were [*sic*] very dirty. We therefore returned home soon.

Saturday 7th January 1899

Shriram Pant left for Bombay by the 12 o'clock train. I received a letter from the First Prince. We finished and sent to the press the first four incarnations of Vishnu. In the evening we three walked by the side of the railway for some distance and returned home before night fall.

Sunday 8th January 1899

In the morning as usual went to Bhaji to paint, after breakfast read the 'Advocate', Bombay Gazetteer and the Standard. In the evening walked towards Karli to sketch another bit of scenery with water. After return wrote to Jaymohan Das and Bapuji.

Monday 9th January 1899

Bathed and breakfasted rather late. Painted the pillar in the Damayanti and Hams,[101] which Brother painted for the [Madras Fine Arts] exhibition. In the evening I commenced a painting of the Karli River, which if there was more water would have looked very beautiful. Nelu Pant brought the Poona Gazetteers.

Tuesday 10th January 1899

The trees in my pictures were quite spoilt and I [+++] of being able to mend it. It looks hard and wanting an atmosphere. The Karli River promises to become a good picture. At night I read Subbarao's speech in connection with the Congress. Received a letter from the Prince.

Wednesday 11th January 1899

I have got sore throat which troubles me much. I went out early to work. Introduced a few figures into my picture of Bhaji. In the evening Bahara Sahib the Inamdar of Bhaji who had gone to Penwil returned. We asked Nana Sahib to arrange for a model from Poona.

Thursday 12th January 1899

Though I did not feel well I went out early to work. I improved the painting a good deal. The trees in the middle distance found most difficult to manage. The afternoon was spent in the pillar of Damayanti's picture. The cold seems to be decreasing. Makarsankranti Festival.

Friday 13th January 1899

This morning I almost finished my landscape of Bhaji. I received a letter from cousin enclosing copy of Dewan of Travancore's letter regarding Kilimanur forest. I tried to develop a few plates exposed by Shriram Pant only one came out well, the next were all spoilt.

Saturday 14th January 1899

I finished the [painting] 'Lohagad and Bhaji' this morning. At about 7 p.m. Schlicker [Schleicher] arrived without any previous intimation. He brought me a letter from Bapuji Sakaram, Photographers stating that they will take up Post and X'Mas Cards[102] of about one lakh for Rs 1000.

Sunday 15th January 1899

Schleicher left for Bombay by the 12 o'clock train. He told us that he would be satisfied if he got Rs 200 salary and a certain percentage out of the net profit. We told him we shall consider about it and then tell him. We promised to arrive in Bombay on the evening of the 19th.

Monday 16th January 1899

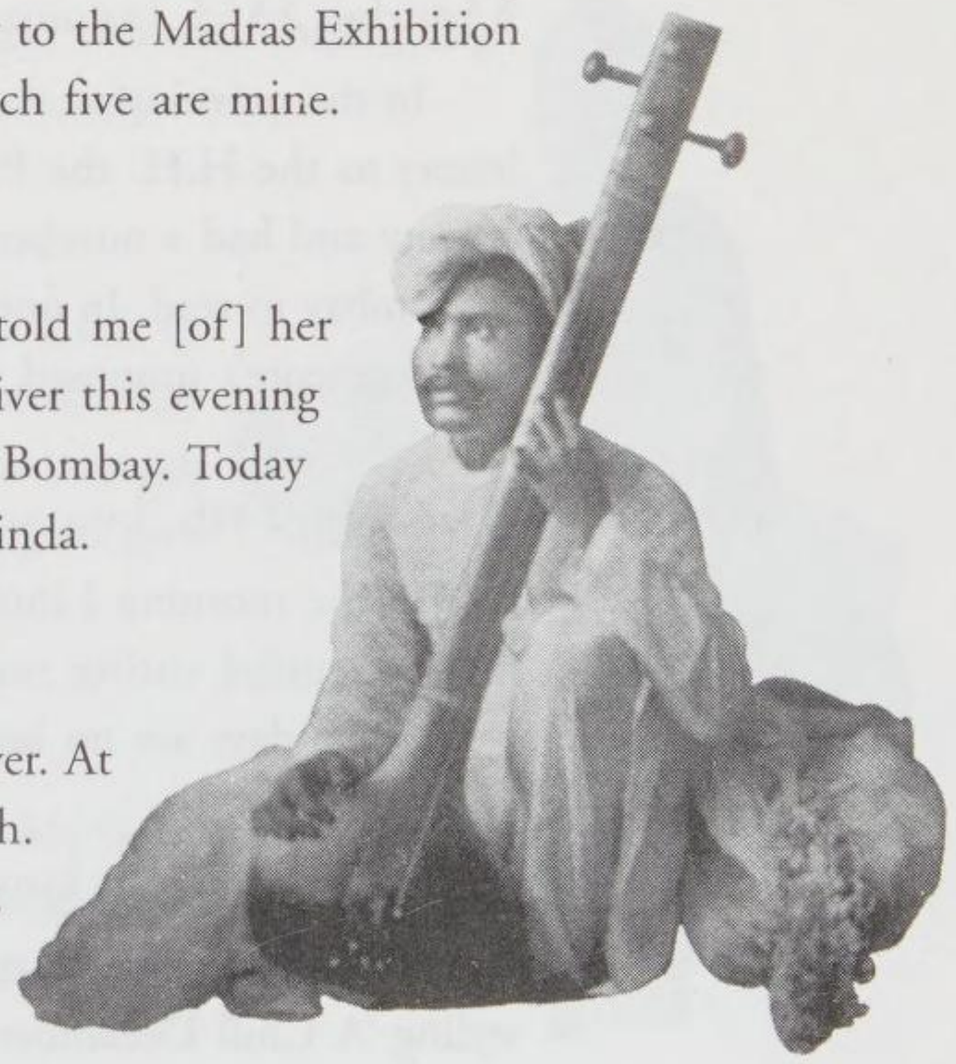
I commenced this morning and the picture with our [+++] man and his family sitting round a fire. This promises to be a great success as every thing will get on well. We wrote the Honourable Secretary to the Madras Exhibition that we would [+++] between us 7 paintings of which five are mine.

Tuesday 17th January 1899

I received a letter from my wife in which she told me [of] her arrival at her father's house. I finished the Indrani River this evening I shall have to take it up again after my return from Bombay. Today the weather is cold. I wrote to my Cousin and Govinda.

Wednesday 18th January 1899

In the evening I finished the picture of Karli River. At night we made preparations to leave for Ambarnath. We travelled by the Mail which left Karli at about 2 o'clock midnight. We got one whole compartment to ourselves and so we were comfortable.



Thursday 19th January 1899

Early in the morning at 3 we reached Ambarnath. Slept in the porter's cabin till morning. Ambarnath about 20 minutes walk. The temple is carved from bottom to top and the work is beautiful. After performing mother's Shradha we left for Bombay where we reached in the evening. We put up with our friend Mr Jagmohan Das.

Friday 20th January 1899

In the morning we visited Dr Balachandra also Ms Narain Rao. We went next to Damodar Bai and gave an order for the Maharaja's dress. In the afternoon we visited our Press first, then went to Mr Soundy next went to the [+++] Theater to see an exhibition of Cinematograph.[103]

Saturday 21st January 1899

In the morning we called at Ms Rustomji Patel and then went to the Fort to make certain purchases. Then we returned home—it was very late. In the evening we went to Mr Schleicher where I signed the agreement with [+++] for supplying 14,0000 copies of cards for Rs 1000. We next went to the Hon. Dr Balachandra where at a meeting of [+++] it was resolved to remove Press to Karli.

Sunday 22nd January 1899

In the morning I went to the Press. In the evening we paid a visit to Maharaja of Benares. It was interesting to see [+++] woman coming and bowing before him. At night we left by the 11.30 train for Karli. Ms Jaymohan Das our kind host was at the station as also Bapuji to see us off.

Monday 23rd January 1899

In the morning at about 5 o'clock we reached Karli. I wrote in the evening letters to the H.H. the Prince and the Honorary Secretary Madras Fine Arts Society and had a number of old newspapers which arrived during our absence in Bombay to read. In one of them there was an extract criticising the Maharaja of Travancore's proposed marriage.

Tuesday 24th January 1899

In the morning I introduced a sheep into my picture of our Mali and his father [family] sitting round the fire. In the evening I [+++] after the day's work. The days are no longer cold.

Wednesday 25th January 1899

I painted in the morning the Mali's family around the fire which I intend styling 'A Chill December Morning' though I did it at the end of January. At

night I wrote letters to Rajagopalacharia and Jaymohan Das advising desp atch to the former of pearls and the latter, a photograph of Brother. [At night I wrote letters to Rajagopalacharia and Jaymohan Das. As advised despatched to the former pearls and the latter a photograph of Brother].

Thursday 26th January 1899

We have been here for one complete lunar month. It was on the last full moon that we arrived here in the morning. We received from Shriram Pant a case containing frame and pictures, I mean old pictures. In the evening Bhow Sahib who had returned from Poona called.

Friday 27th January 1899

This is a place where there are few birds. The only birds I have heard are the black wagtail which is one of the best singers in Travancore, and Kohah we call the Kallarkani [written in Malayalam] which is usually heard at nights. Kites are also common. A few days back we heard the howl of a jackal.

Saturday 28th January 1899

This evening Messers Schleicher, Girhardt [Gerhardt] and their friend Sait, a young German came up. After supper the two men—Sait and Schleicher—went out in search of boars, having heard that they come out into the fields. But they returned unsuccessful after waiting for two hours.

Sunday 29th January 1899

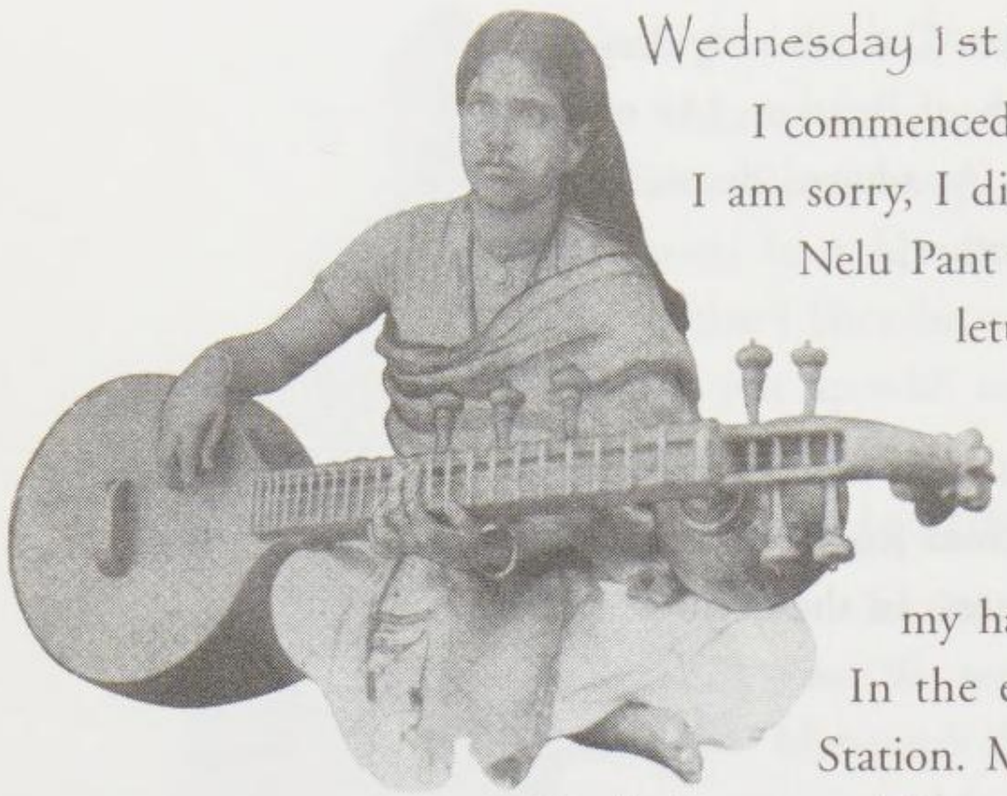
In the morning I showed my paintings to them. They liked very much my 'Chill December Morning' and also the 'River Indrani'. Mr Gerhardt remained at home assisting us in our work while the other two went for hunting. They returned in the evening having bagged one boar and antelope.

Monday 30th January 1899

At 5 o'clock in the morning Schleicher and Sait left for Bombay. We induced Ms Gerhardt to stay with us for one day more as his assistance was valuable. He is a good artist though he has no time to practice painting. We had nothing to give him for dinner except rice and curry.

Tuesday 31st January 1899

The morning was very windy though not so cold. Ms Gerhardt left for Bombay by the 1 o'clock train. He is such a good man that we like him very much. We were sorry when he left us. I received a letter from my wife, also a parcel from Bombay.



Wednesday 1st February 1899

I commenced another landscape with the tank in the fore ground. I am sorry, I did not begin it earlier when there was more water. Nelu Pant who returned from Poona left for Bombay. I sent a letter to Shriram Pant with him to send accounts.

Thursday 2nd February 1899

Shriram Pant arrived early this morning with my harmonium and glass panes for the veranda windows. In the evening we got ourselves weighed at the Railway Station. My brother was 125 pounds, myself 124 and Appay 103. Shriram was 138.

Friday 3rd February 1899

The morning and the forenoon were cloudy. I could not therefore make much progress with my picture the 'Bhaji Tank'. In the evening we walked up the hill overlooking our bungalow. The ascent was very difficult but once on the top, it was very pleasant, came down at 6.30.

Saturday 4th February 1899

We were glad last evening to pay a visit to the cottage of the Dhangar or Cowherd who supplies us with milk. He lives on the top of the high hill. When we went there the father and mother had gone out leaving a little girl of 7 and a little goat at home. It was a touching scene. The girl appeared to be intelligent with her soft persuasive eyes.

Sunday 5th February 1899

Today by the 12.30 train Shriram left for Bombay. In the afternoon all the Brahmin women and children of Bhaji came to see our pictures. Our friend Bhow Sahib's mother and wife were among them. They seemed to admire the pictures much. The sky has cleared and the weather became cooler.

Monday 6th February 1899

Early this morning we went to the bank of the tank to paint as the sky was clear. At night there was in our tent a performance of Hari Kirtan by a Baul[104] who came from a village near Ahmadnagar. He recounted the story of Arjun and Subhadra. Some of the Brahmins of the village including Bahad Sahib formed the audience.

Tuesday 7th February 1899

We sent the following pictures to the Madras Exhibition this morning. Brother's 'Damayanti' and 'Hindu Devotee'. My 'Water Bearer', 'River Indrani'

and 'Chill December Morning' and Appa's[105] 'Still Life'. In the morning we called on Doctor Balachandra who arrived by 5 o'clock train. He prescribed for Appay who has pain in the chest since yesterday.

Wednesday 8th February 1899

Last evening there was singing by a man from one of the neighbouring villages. He had a good voice. Narayanan whom we had sent to Lanouli [Lonavla] to bring a medicine for Appay not having returned at night caused us great anxiety. He returned this morning and said he had gone to Bombay for the medicine.

Thursday 9th February 1899

Received a parcel from Shriram containing shoes, medicine etc. In the evening we took a small walk. We were accompanied by one Mahender a poor young man whose house in Bhaji was lately burned down. He is the Village Kirtan performer.[106] His condition is pitiable.

Friday 10th February 1899

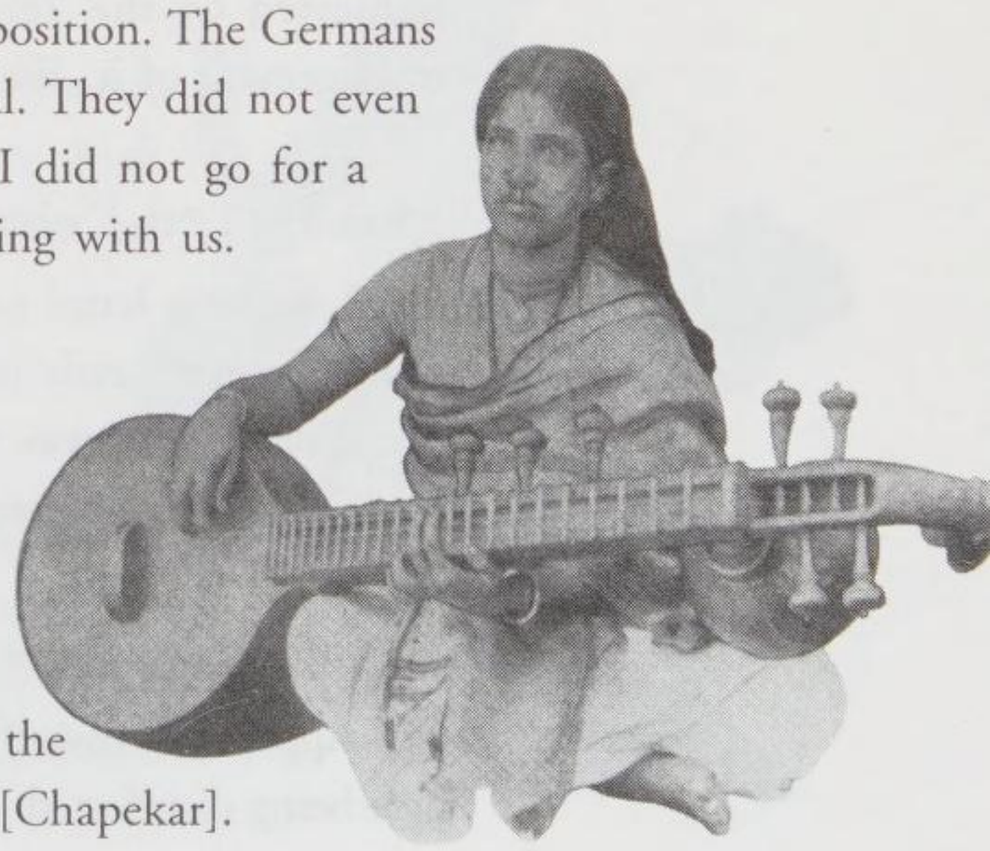
This evening the cousin of Mehandalal, a songster who lives in Bombay arrived here and he sung at our own place. The singing was indeed good and we spent two hours very agreeably as it is not often we come across such artists in a small village like this.

Saturday 11th February 1899

This evening Messers Schleicher, Gerhardt and Sait, their friend, came up again for shooting. In the afternoon two English men came up and asked me the way to Bhaji caves. They were invited to come and see our paintings. The servants who accompanied them told me, one of them made pencil sketches.

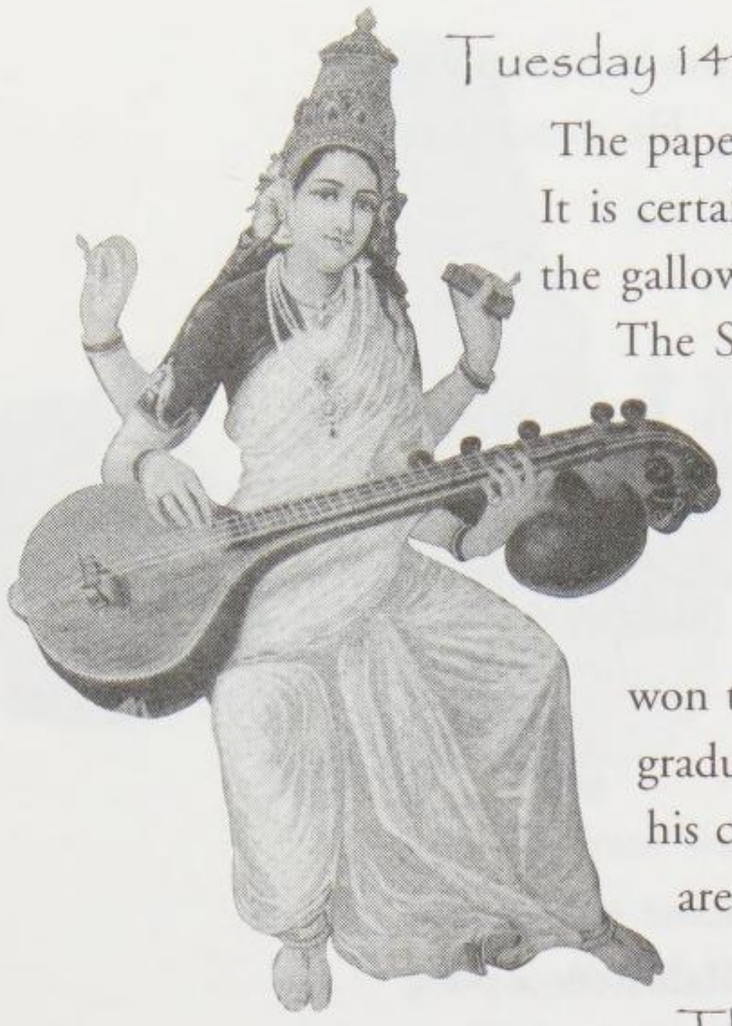
Sunday 12th February 1899

I did not feel well this morning on account of indisposition. The Germans went for shikar but returned in the evening unsuccessful. They did not even meet any game. They returned at about 4 quite tired. I did not go for a walk. Bahad Sahib called in the morning and sat speaking with us.



Monday 13th February 1899

Early in the morning Schleicher and others left for Bombay. Bahad Sahib and Nelu Pant left by the 12 o'clock train for Junnar on private business. Nelu Pant who had returned from Poona in the morning told me about the excitement in Poona caused by the murder of the Dravid brothers[107] and the arrest of Vasudev Chapakir [Chapekar].



Tuesday 14th February 1899

The papers received today contained full details of the Poona tragedy, It is certain that [+++] [Vasudev Chapekar] will follow his brothers to the gallows. Letters received from home continued to say that H.H. The Senior Rani was very [+++] [angry] at Appay's resolution to give up his studies and take to painting.

Wednesday 15th February 1899

Received a letter from cousin K.R.R. saying that we have won the Gonan pallikara case in the Zilla court and that father was gradually sinking. I am writing to him to day to do every thing for his comfort and convenience. It is a source of great sorrow that we are not able to attend on him.

Thursday 16th February 1899

This afternoon a man by name Bal Krishna Vishvanath Da [?] B.A. came and like an interviewer put a lot of questions regarding Brother's life and art to which we answered. Near the railway station below our bungalow plague sheds were erected. Arrangements have been made to disinfect those Bombay passengers who alight here.

Friday 17th February 1899

The Poona Brahmin in charge of the newly started disinfection camp requested to be allowed to take his meals with us, as he has no friends or relations and as his caste people at Bhaji were not hospitable enough. He is a poor man and we allowed him to do so. Walked to Karli tank in the evening.

Saturday 18th February 1899

Received a letter from Seta Rao at the desire of H.H. the Gaikwar asking us if we could find a Namboodiri Brahmin[108] for the Badrinath Temple[109] as requested by the Tehri Raja[110] to whom Government has made over the management of it. We wrote in reply to ascertain the remuneration and [+++].

Sunday 19th February 1899

I wrote a letter to H.H. the 1st prince in reply to H.H's of the 14th. I walked to Karli early in the morning to study how the cities look in the grey of the morning. It was so cold, I thought my hands would freeze. Wrote to Schleicher to send statements of the liabilities of the press.

Monday 20th February 1899

Appay and myself went to the well side to see the passengers who alighted here being disinfected. When they saw Doctor Haq, [they] came and complained

to me and requested to intercede for them with the doctor. They were let off after they had washed their dirty clothes in disinfectant.

Tuesday 21st February 1899

By the 4 a.m. train Shriram Pant arrived from Bombay and brought press accounts for last year for our examination. The paper received to day showed that the plague was steadily increasing. In the evening I took a walk along the rail line. I was suffering from head-ache in the morning.

Wednesday 22nd February 1899

Today by the mid-day train we went to Khandla and walked along the railway line to the Reversing Station with the assistant Station Master. The scenery was splendid. Returned to Khandla in the evening took our supper at Narajana Rao's station master rooms and slept at the waiting room; disturbed by passing trains.

Thursday 23rd February 1899

Early in the morning by the 4 o'clock train we returned to Karli much fatigued with yesterday's walk and want of rest. Bahad Sahib returned from Junnar. I wrote letters to Rajagopalachariyar and the Honorary Secretary Fine Arts [+++] [Society], Madras to send catalogue.

Friday 24th February 1899

Took a light purgative this morning. Received a reply from Mr Parameswaran Pillai saying he will try to secure an agent for Madras for selling our pictures. The day was very warm. At night Shriram Pant read to us a Mahratta Romance called Paniput by Nagesura V. Bapat. In the morning Dabharis Karbari came here.

Saturday 25th February 1899

This evening the Madras Fine Arts Exhibition opens according to the papers. I am anxious to know what people think about our exhibits. This day afternoon was so windy that we were afraid lest the tent should be thrown away.

Sunday 26th February 1899

The morning was so misty that the sun's rays had hardly power to pierce the thick veil. The whole day continues to be misty. The ground which we expected to [acquire] from Bahad Sahib and his cousins for our press, we were told could not be had and their terms were unreasonable. We are trying for an other plot.

Monday 27th February 1899

Received a telegram from Ms Schlucker [Schleicher] approving of the purchase of the plot near the well. In the evening we went to the spot and found it in every way more convenient then Bahad Sahib's ground. I hope the owner will not change his word to give one acre for Rs 275.

Tuesday 28th February 1899

Strange to say the owner of the plot near the well refused to part with one acre unless we purchased two acres at once. Shriram Pant therefore left for Bombay to consult with Schlu[+++] [Schleicher] as to what we should do now. I received from Thacker & Co. copies of Hooker's Himalayan Journal[111] and Private Life of an Eastern King.

Wednesday 1st March 1899

From the 'Morning Standard' of the 27th ult. I learnt that my painting of the 'Water Bearer' won the prize of Rs 50 for the best figure painting in the Madras Fine Arts Exhibition. My 'Chill December Morning' was 'Highly commended'. I am anxious to know what the 'Mail' has to say of them.

Thursday 2nd March 1899

Schleicher came up by the 12 o'clock train and in the afternoon made arrangements to purchase another acre of ground near the well for Rs 300. The owner is an old man to whom Rs 15 were given as earnest money so that he may not change his word again. Shriram has been telegraphed to come up.

Friday 3rd March 1899

By today's post we received a catalogue and prize-winners' names from the Art Society. I telegraphed to the Honourable Secretary offering my painting of 'Water Bearer' as a present to adorn the society room in the Government Museum. Shriram Pant returned from Bombay.

Saturday 4th March 1899

In the evening Messers Gerhardt and Sait came up from Bombay. The Madras 'Mail' and the Times, which contained notices about the exhibition spoke highly of Brother's 'Damayanti' and 'Hindu Devotee'. [They] seemed to think they were the pictures of the show, though the judges did not award neither [*sic*] of them a prize. The press opinion about my work was also good.

Sunday 5th March 1899

This morning Ms Gerhardt suggested certain improvements in my painting of the Bhaji Tank which together with the Lohagad [Hill] were sent to the

Bombay Art Exhibition with Shriram Pant. Schleicher and Sait bagged one deer and pea-hen. Honorary Secretary of Madras Art Society wished to know the price of 'Damayanti'; Replied for it.

Monday 6th March 1899

Early in the morning the Germans left for Bombay. At night wrote to Messers Surundy & Co. that Brother's 'Damayanti' having been sold in Madras could not be exhibited in Bombay. Wrote also to Bapuji from whom we had not heard for a long time, and Dawoodbhai about state dress for Maharaja.

Tuesday 7th March 1899

I wrote to H.H. The 1st Prince and nephew Ms Ravi Varma, Deputy Collector of whose transfer to Bellary [I] learnt from the Standard. Received a letter from Ms E. Thurston,[112] Honorary Secretary, Fine Arts' Society Madras, thanking me for my present of 'Water Carrier' to the Society.

Wednesday 8th March 1899

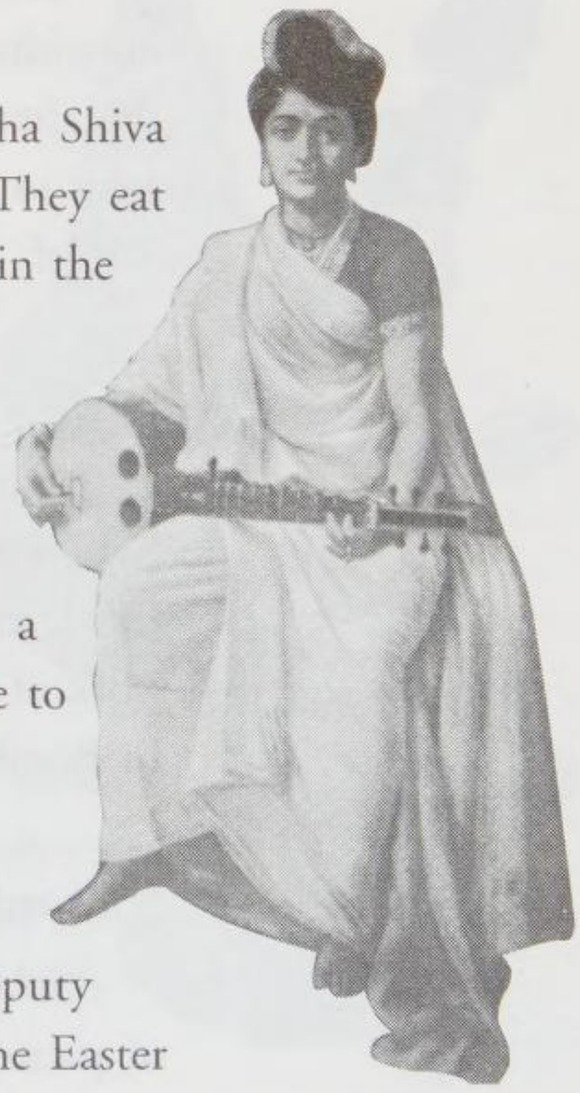
I wrote a letter to Cousin. I made a sketch of the tank in the evening after sunset when the sky was yet of a bright orange and the distant hills in a deep purple. The reflection of the sky is beautiful in the rippling water. Bapuji writes he will provide us lodgings at Matunga.

Thursday 9th March 1899

Chathu whom we had sent to Bombay yesterday to bring for Appay medicine for cough returned today at 12 o'clock. The man [+++] of the place we were told would come here in the evening to see us but he did not turn up.

Friday 10th March 1899

I got a cheque for Rs 50 from Madras Art Society. Today is Maha Shiva Ratri and the people of Bhaji are celebrating it as best as they can. They eat only fruits and vegetables. We were invited to attend a Hindu Kirtan in the village temple, but we shall not go as it takes place at night.



Saturday 11th March 1899

I received a letter from my cousin in which he said that the Ulsavam[113] in our temple went off well and that our father was in a critical condition. As we are soon going back, I hope we shall be able to see him before the worst happens to him.

Sunday 12th March 1899

Today's post brought us a letter from nephew Ravi Varma, Deputy Collector, saying he has transferred and that he may perhaps spend the Easter

Holidays with us here. We have [+++] to leave for Bombay by mail to night. Rama Varma is suffering from cough badly.

Monday 13th March 1899

Early in the morning we reached Matunga and put up with Shriram Pant. In the afternoon I went to the Press, and thence to Daw [Dawood] [+++] and Soundy. In the evening we removed to Peroli Hill, Matunga where Mr Bhapuji had secured a shed for us. Owing to the plague most people were living in huts out of the city.

Tuesday 14th March 1899

This afternoon I and Purushotam went to Kalkher & Co, next to Hussainally and hence I bought some colours. I next went to the Town Hall to see the exhibition of pictures which was not as good as some of the shows of past years. I learnt [that] I secured H.H. the 1st Prince of Travancore's Prize for my picture of the Lohagad Hill. Returned home in the evening.

Wednesday 15th March 1899

Bapuji is laid up with Rheumatism. We went to the exhibition. Brother myself and nephew and spent some time in looking at the pictures. From the Town we went to Thacker & Co.'s and bought an easel for Rs 6–8, and then returned to Matunga, to Shriram Pant's shed near Railway station.

Thursday 16th March 1899

Early in the morning we paid a visit to Ms Jaymohan Das who notwithstanding the plague was still staying at his residence in Chikalwadi. In the afternoon we went to D.B. Dinshaw and gave him [+++] portraits; next went to Hellsonally [Hussainally], A.K. Joshi at Kalbadevi Road[114] and Market. We left Bombay at night.

Friday 17th March 1899

Arrived at Karli this morning. [+++] came with Shriram Pant's wife and Kare with us. We met in the train. Ms Narotam Das Morarji; Ms Schucker [Schleicher] who had arrived here the previous day was superintending the work of building at new Press premises. The afternoon was very dry and warm. In Bombay we had cool breeze.

Saturday 18th March 1899

Schleicher told us that A.K. Joshi was willing to purchase the whole stock of pictures printed up to date for Rs 22,000 which would clear our debt I

mean of the Press. A.K. Joshi agreed to it. I don't think the arrangement very good but circumstances compel us to close with it.

Sunday 19th March 1899

I received a cheque for Rs 70 from the Honorary Secretary Bombay Art Society being the amount of H.H. the 1st Prince of Travancore's prize for the best landscape with figures by a native of [+++].

Monday 20th March 1899

The afternoons nowadays are very dry and warm. If we keep the doors of the room closed before the sun gets warm it will be bearable. After 4 the wind or breeze becomes cool and the nights and mornings are pleasant. Wrote to Ms Jamsetji Jamutji[?] about his brother's portrait which he wants to be painted.

Tuesday 21st March 1899

Today we received a letter from Govindbhai H. Desai, assistant Judge asking us what our charges are for portraits as they have intended to get the likeness of their retiring Chief Justice painted. Replied full length Rs 1500, half Rs 700, bust 300. I wish we get an opportunity of revisiting Baroda.

Wednesday 22nd March 1899

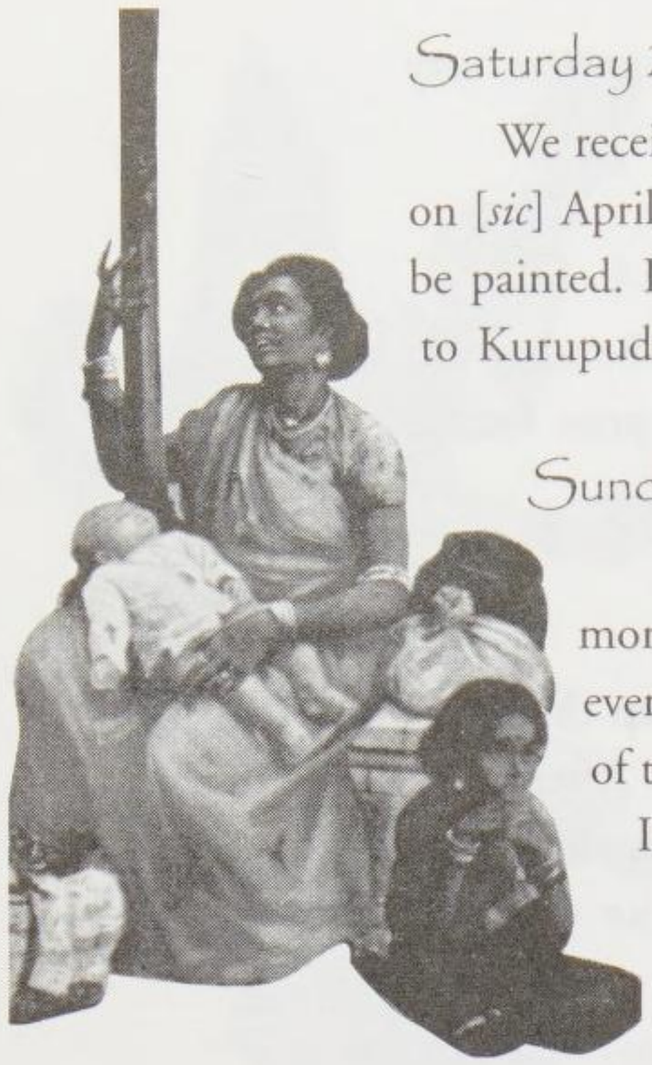
We got ourselves weighed again this evening after the 2nd February. My brother weighed [1]26 pounds, 1 pound more, Myself 28 [128] pounds, 4 pounds more but Appa was only 100 pounds, 3 less than before while Shriram Pant remained the same. I was surprised I gained so much in weight in such a short time.

Thursday 23rd March 1899

I received today from the Honorary Secretary, Bombay Art Society Rs 108 being the sale proceeds of two of my landscapes sold in the exhibition. I should consider that my efforts this year have been on the whole successful as I gained two prizes and sold two works though for small price.

Friday 24th March 1899

Early this morning we found on getting up a long line of mist or cloud stretching along the whole length of the valley. The cause of it—I think—was a vapor[ous] warm current of air from the sea passing over the cool air of the valley. This produced a sudden change in the temperature which had been very hot lately.



Saturday 25th March 1899

We received a letter from Baroda saying that at a meeting of the subscribers on [*sic*] April it will be decided for what price the Chief Justice's portrait should be painted. I telegraphed to Cousin K.R.R. to ask Pandulay to send us a boat to Kurupudan on April 1st. Weather cooler.

Sunday 26th March 1899

Mr Shriram Pant who had gone to Bombay returned early in the morning. Mr Bhas Sahib the Inamdar gave us a farewell dinner this evening. We enjoyed the evening very much in his house. The people of the village lighted their Holi fire which blazed and crackled furiously.

It was nearly 12 o'clock when we returned home.

Monday 27th March 1899

Schleicher and two of his friends came up on bicycles all the way from Bombay quite tired. Anant arrived at about 7 in the evening. We went to Lonavle by train having sent our luggage by carts in the evening. We started by the Mail train for Arkonam, Sethu Rao came by the same train.

Tuesday 28th March 1899

The Baroda Dewan's family was being sent back to Madras previous to his retirement. Ms Sethu Rao's company was very agreeable. At Tungabhadra our servants were not detained as we feared. Our names were written down and allowed to pass. There was examination at Tadpatri, we passed through that also.

Wednesday 29th March 1899

At Arkonam we were again examined and given passports. Sethu Rao took leave of us here. We took an early breakfast in the native refreshment room and started for Shoranor by the passenger train at 9 a.m. There was examination at Jolarpet at Salem one Mr Fisher, barrister got in to our compartment and travelled as far as Erode conversing with us.

Thursday 30th March 1899

From Erode we had as fellow passenger one Mr Joseph I.C.S. and he was quite the contrast of Mr Fisher. He was in a rage with everybody and seemed not to like our presence in a first class compartment. He was going to Mettupalayam. Reached Shoranur at 9.30, half an hour later. Left for Trichur after breakfast by country carts. After supper left Trichur for Karu.

Friday 31st March 1899

Arrived at Karu [+++] in the morning but found no breakfast had come. Put up at the palace. There was a light shower of rain in the afternoon.

We were interested with [introduced to] two Bairagi females,[115] one quite a young one who had come from Brindavan all the way alone. The name of the girl was Sidhsari and the two were going to Rameshwaram. We gave them food.

Saturday 1st April 1899

Left Karu[+++] at about 11.15 a.m. and reached Ernaculam at about 7. The day was cloudy and a strong wind blew against. There was a light shower in the afternoon. We took our supper at the late Dewan Mr Govind Menon's house. One Shankavaran doing the duties of the host in the absence of Ms Padmanabhan Menon here. We left at about 10 p.m.

Sunday 2nd April 1899

Reached Alleppy at 7.30 a.m. Took our breakfast and departed at noon for Mavalikara, but owing to unfavourable wind and shallow waters we did not reach our destination till midnight. I resolved to sleep in the boat till morning, as I was too drowsy to walk.

Monday 3rd April 1899

In the morning before sun rise I got up and walked to Ulsavamadham,[116] Doctor and Appa having gone over night. In the evening we saw the procession in the temple which was marred by a drizzling rain. I retired soon after supper.

Tuesday 4th March [*sic*] [April] 1899

This evening a messenger came from my wife who is staying with her father at Pallipad requesting me to pay a visit to her as her father too want[s] to see me.

The place is about 4 miles from Mavelikara and I started after supper in our cabin boat. The old man has been ailing for some time. I spent the night there.

Wednesday 5th April 1899

Today is my thirty ninth birthday.[117] Almost all the male members of the different branches of the family were invited to dine with us at Ulsavamadam. This is the last day of the Ulsavam in the Temple of Krishna. I went at midnight to see the return procession. It is a pity that the whole night is taken up in a pageant in which there is very little variety. It was about day break when every thing was over.

Thursday 6th April 1899

We left Mavelikara at about 10.30 after breakfast.

[No entry between 6th April 1899 and 1st January 1901]

1901

Tuesday 1st January 1901

Leaving Kottayam last night we arrived at sunrise at Arukutty where the Magistrate Sankumar Pillai rendered us every assistance. Some of our rowers who had decamped were replaced here. Rather late at night we reached Tiruvanchikulam where we halted for a couple of hours for supper. The Thiruvathisa festival being in full swing there the voice of women singing in the neighbouring houses could be heard.

Wednesday 2nd January 1901

Early in the morning we reached Trichur and put up at the old Dewan's (Govind Menon) house and about 2 p.m. left for Shoranur in a horse tonga, the servants following with luggage in bullock carts. The railway work is making rapid progress and in another year we hope to be quite independent of these wretched carts. Our horse—being vicious—we reached Shoranur late at night. The night was spent at the local palace. Supper which was ordered from a boarding house was wretched.

Thursday 3rd January 1901

We were up by [*sic*] time and after a hurried bath and breakfast[,] Left for the railway station on the other side of the river. The bridge [was] not finished. We caught the train in the right time and started for Arconam having brought through-tickets for Bombay. A lot of Malayalee ladies and gentlemen were travelling in the same train among them being Eatan Raja of Calicut—a Sanskrit Poet—and he presented us with some of his works. The 3rd class carriages were crammed with people going to a festival at Coimbatore.

Friday 4th January 1901

Brother and Appay alighted at Arconam while I proceeded with one servant to Madras where I put up at the Ramaswamy Mudaliar Choltry.[118] Visited Ms Rajagopalaacharyar and Sir S. Ramaswami made some purchases and left by the Bombay Mail in the evening and joined brother at Arconam. We met accidentally Ms Srinivasa Rao, Pleader of Bellary whom we had met last year in his native place in the company of our beloved late First Prince of happy memory.

Saturday 5th January 1901

Our nephew Ravi Varma Raja, Deputy Collector having been transferred to Tanjore from Adoni we had to proceed straight to Raichore where we had a hasty breakfast. Our fellow passengers two Eurasians were good men, one was Dr D'Silva, civil surgeon of some place in Birar [Berar]. We were all by ourselves in our compartment. At Dhoud [Daund] these two gentlemen left us and we

sat up until we had passed Karli where our Press, a solitary building among hills could be seen in the bright moon light.

Sunday 6th January 1901

At six in the morning we reached Victoria Terminus, Bombay, and were met by some of our friends. We drove to the Setna Lodging in Girgaum which had been arranged for our temporary residence. The morning was extremely cold. Our old friends Mr Sohrab Pestonji and his good aunt were still living in the same building and we were glad to meet them again after some months. We spent the day at home feeling too much tired by the long journey.

Monday 7th January 1901

Our lodging not being comfortable we have to seek another. Dr Mathai having told us there was a vacant house close to him in Clare Road, Byculla. We called on the agent Bottlewallah & Co. but could not find him in the office. At 12 o'clock we called again and settled to take the house paying the rent Rs 150 for one month in advance. The house was ordered to be cleaned for us.

Tuesday 8th January 1901

The next morning we visited Sir Balachandra and he advised us not to stay in Bombay as the plague is fast rising. We therefore tried to get our money back from Bottlewala & Co. but could not succeed. Consequently decided to stay in the new house in Clare Road until the plague became epidemic.

Wednesday 9th January 1901

This evening we removed to the Clare Road. Next to us is the Rock Bakery and the noise that is produced there is very great. In other respects it is a good house and the location too is not bad. Dr Mathai lives next door to us on the back of the house which overlooks the Ripon Road.

Thursday 10th January 1901

Wrote to the Director of Public Instructions, Madras, forwarding him copies of the Mahratti Primers—printed in our Press requesting him to give us permission to print similar books in Tamil—Malayalam for use of schools in the Madras Presidency.

Friday 11th January 1901

As nothing worth recording having taken place I think I cannot do better than give a list of the principal places of interest we have visited in India.

The first time my brother and myself left Travancore on professional work was in 1878 when we were invited to Pudukota [Pudukkottai] by the late Raja at the instruction of Ms Sesthriasastri. My brother had accompanied by one of his cousins and brother-in-law undertaken a pilgrimage to Mukambika Temple on the West Coast of Malabar in 1870. This was the first time that Brother left home. I was then too young to go with him.

List of Native states we have visited excluding Travancore and Cochin: Pudukotta, Mysore, Baroda, Bhavangar[Bhavnagar], Palitana (Punjab) Jaipur, Ulwar [Alwar], Gwalior, Ratlam, Indore, Udaipur (April, May, June 1901).

Tuesday 15th January 1901

Places of Pilgrimage and worship:

Benaras, Gaya, Ayodhiya, Prayag, (Mathra, Brindaban, Govardhan, Gokul), Pushkar, Sidhpur, Nasik, [+++] Conjivaram, Chindavaram, Mayavaram, Shrirangam, Madura.

Principal Cities:

Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Tinnevally [Tirunelvely], Madura, Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Kumbakonam, Salem.

Friday 18th January 1901

Wrote [a] reply to the letter of the Raja of Tehri in which he said that Vasudeva Reswal[119] who was under trial for some offence would be punished. Whether it was true that he had been convicted once before in Travancore. We had no knowledge of it and he was recommended by H.H. the late First Prince who would not have done so if he had been convicted.

Saturday 19th January 1901

Coimbatore, Bangalore, Gooty, Bellary, Hubli, Dharwar, Belgaum, Goa and Pondicherry, Poona, Shilapur, Broach, Ahmedabad, Ajmere, Agra, Delhi, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Allahabad, Patna, Jabulpur.

Monday 21st January 1901

Hillstations:

Nilgiris, Darjeeling, Matheran (Near Bombay)

Tuesday 22nd January 1901

Titled native gentlemen we know or knew intimately[:]

1. Raja Sir. T. Madhawa Rao.
2. A. Seshia Sastri C.S.I.
3. V. Rama Aiyengar C.I.S.
4. Sir Seshadri Iyer

5. Sir Savolu Ramaswamy Mudaliar[?]
6. Mr Justice Teling[?]
7. Sir Multhuswamy Iyer
8. Sir Jamsetji Jijibhai, the late Baronet
9. Sir Dinshaw Manuhji Petit
10. Sir Balachandra Krishna
11. Raja Lachman Das O.I.C. [Muttra]
12. Raja Pannalal Mehta [Udaipur]

We have painted portraits of these men.

Wednesday 23rd January 1901

This morning's papers announced the death of Victoria Queen Empress. Her loss is universally mourned. The good Queen's name had been so long and familarly known throughout India that it is difficult to conceive a state of things without her. In the evening we drove through the Fort to Apollo Bunder and found most shops closed and several with flags flying half mast.

Thursday 24th January 1901

We left Byculla Station at 8 a.m. for Karli where we arrived at 12.30. Schlicher [Schleicher], Girhardt and Shriram [Pant] were at the station and we drove to Sir Balchandra's bungalow kindly placed at our disposal by him. In the evening I had a severe attack of fever, temperature rising to 105. I took one dose of Bottiwal's aque mixture. The fever was due to the effect of cold from which I have been suffering for a week.

Friday 25th January 1901

I had no sound sleep last night, as I was troubled by bugs with which the furniture and every thing in the house was infested. The fever however went down in the morning. Took a dose of Eno's Fruit Salt. Schleicher and Gerhardt called in the evening. We had again a talk about the sale of our business to the former, but as his offer was still very low we had to decline it. The night was pretty cool. We returned early having had nothing to do.

Saturday 26th January 1901

Our mother's 'Shradham' falls today. Though we could not perform it in the prescribed form from want of Namboodris, Brother bathed in the Indrani River and gave 'Pindam'. I could not join him owing to my indisposition. I sent some altered proposals to Schleicher through Shriram the terms being suggested by the latter and therefore more favourable to Schleicker [Schleicher] than ourselves. He promised to give us a decided reply to-morrow morning.

Sunday 27th January 1901

I commenced a small sketch showing the 'Lohagarh'[120] in the distance and a woman winnowing corn from the top of a cart in the foreground. The picture promises to be successful. In the afternoon I commenced another sketch of the 'Vizapur Hill and Fort'. The nights are very cool and pleasant but the heat in the daytime is great. We are negotiating with Schleicher for the sale of the Press.

Monday 28th January 1901

Received a letter from Ms G. Parameswaran Pillay requesting us to send him a short life of Brother with photographs of some of his Puranic Pictures for publication in some magazine in England. We have arranged with Shriram to settle with Schleicher the terms of the sale. Anant Rao also arrived for the same purpose.

Tuesday 29th January 1901

The terms agreed to by us and Schleicher are

1. That he should pay us Rs 25,000 in the following installments: Rs 5000 in February, Rs 5000 [in] May and the remaining Rs 15,000 in monthly instalments of Rs 1250
2. That all the debts of the Press including our personal debt of Rs 2000 to A.K. Joshi & Co. and Rs 1500 [?] to Doctor Mathai be borne by him. Minor terms will be settled hereafter.

Wednesday 30th January 1901

Paid a visit to the Press at about 12 p.m. and an hour later left for Bombay. Ms Schleicher has promised to arrive in Bombay on Monday to execute the deed. Alighted at Byculla where Ms Anant Rao was ready to receive us. Plague is steadily increasing here, the total mortality for today being 262.

Thursday 31st January 1901

Visited Sir Balachandra and spoke to him about securing us the orders for Ranade's[121] portrait for the Elphinstone College. He has kindly promised to use his influence. In the evening visited his brother in connection with the sale of the Press but he being unwell could not talk about it. In the evening met Bapuji at Kalbadevi Road and took him with us to our residence.

Friday 1st February 1901

Commenced a portrait in the morning, of H.H. the late First Prince for the Native High School, Trivandrum. In the afternoon visited Mr N.N. Writer's[122] studio in the Church Gate Street. He has fitted it up well. His

work has considerably improved since his return from Europe. He put his colours very thin and that he says is how Whistler[123] paints.

Saturday 2nd February 1901

Early this morning finished and posted a reply to Mr G. Parameswaran Pillai[124] now in London. Today being Queen Empresse's funeral, all shops are closed and business suspended entirely. In the evening drove through the crowded but dull city to the Queen's statue at the foot of which many people had placed beautiful wreaths. There was a large crowd around the Cathedral where The Governor was present at the service.

Sunday 3rd February 1901

We secured a Jew to sit to my brother for a painting for the approaching Fine Art's Exhibition here. His nose was rather crooked at the tip. Otherwise he is a fine specimen of an old Jew. A rupee and a half is his fee for each day's sitting. He is a good and steady model. He has promised to bring a Jewess also.

Monday 4th February 1901

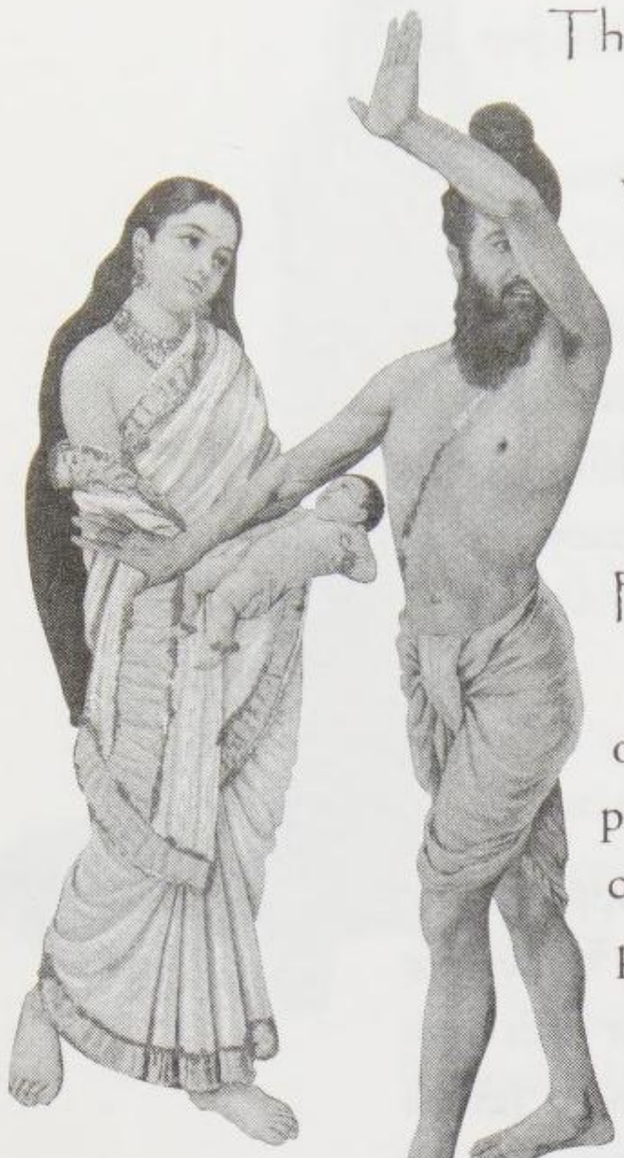
Messers Schleicher and Gerhardt who had arrived the previous day called in the morning. The former said he was trying for money. I and Shriram went to Mr Dixit the solicitor whom Ms Vishnu Pant had recommended to us and explained to him the terms of the proposed sale. Shriram representing Schleicher's interest. We promised to meet again the day at 5 with Schleicher.

Tuesday 5th February 1901

According to promise I went to Mr Dixit's office at 5 but neither Schleicher nor Shriram was there. At 8 p.m. Anant had come and told us that Schleicher was still prepared to buy the Press but as he could not realize the money he requested for the postponement of the signing of the agreement. Mr Dixit showed me the draft he had prepared. Shriram came afterwards. We left without settling anything.

Wednesday 6th February 1901

Mr Gerhardt came in the morning and assisted me in our picture of the 'Winnowing'. In the afternoon the Jew and the Jewess came and sat. The Jewess is an elderly woman and not good looking but had the real type of face peculiar to them. Their picture will be grand when finished. Mr Ponnuswamy called in the evening. Bapuji also came a little earlier. He has invited us for the wedding in his house tomorrow.



Thursday 7th February 1901

The Jew gave us a sitting and his turban and a part of his dress were finished. In the evening we left by train for Ghatcooper [Ghatkopar] 12 miles from Bombay. We put up at a temporary shed erected for us in a big compound belonging to a Parsee gentlemen [*sic*]. The night was extremely cold. Ghatkopar is daily becoming more crowded owing to the plague in the city.

Friday 8th February 1901

The morning extremely cold. Our servants could not sleep owing to the cold. In the afternoon we went to Bombay and tried to paint the Jews at Dr Mathai's but the light was very bad and so could not make any progress. Returned to Ghatkopar at about 8 p.m. The evening very cold.

Saturday 9th February 1901

In the afternoon Brother, Shriram and I went to Mumbra and made a sketch of the 'Bawnmalang' Hill [Bava Malang Hill] lighted by the setting sun. We have to go again to finish the sketch but as there are no convenient trains for the return journey there is some difficulty. We had to wait for 2 hours to catch the train.

Sunday 10th February 1901

The Jew came and we painted him in the afternoon. I have a severe cold and cough and the cool wind that blows here (Ghatcooper) makes them worse. Our shed too is not quite air tight. There is more ventilation than is agreeable.

Monday 11th February 1901

The Jew came again to sit; we painted his head. Settled his accounts and dismissed him. I got severe attack of fever in the evening. I spent a restless night. No medical aid is available near at hand. To morrow we shall call Dr Mathai from Bombay.

Tuesday 12th February 1901

My temperature was nearly 103 and [I] felt shivering with cold. Dr Mathai to whom intimation of my illness had been given called. I have severe cough too, but neither headache nor pain on the chest. Dr left for Bombay at about 10. p.m. Shriram, for Karli a little later.

Wednesday 13th February 1901

I had no fever in the morning and throughout the afternoon but in the evening shivering commenced and fever rose to 102[.] Dr Mathai called at

great inconvenience to himself to treat me again this evening. Shriram returned from Karli where he had gone to put the engine right.

Thursday 14th February 1901

I had no fever this evening. Dr Mathai came to see me and said I shall no more have any from to day. Shriram's aunt Koji[?] left today for Bassin to make arrangements for Venu's approaching wedding. Anant Purushotam and Shriram supped with us the [+++] women had gone.

Friday 15th February 1901

Portraits of European gentlemen and ladies we have painted[:]
His Grace the Duke of Buckingham (Governor of Madras)
Lady Mary Gunville[?] and Lady Anne
Sir Mile Grant Duff
Lady Grant Duff
Dr M.L. Farnez (Madras)
One of the recent Governors General of Portuguese India 1894–5
Dr Willigton Grey (Bombay)
General Sir H. Prendergash

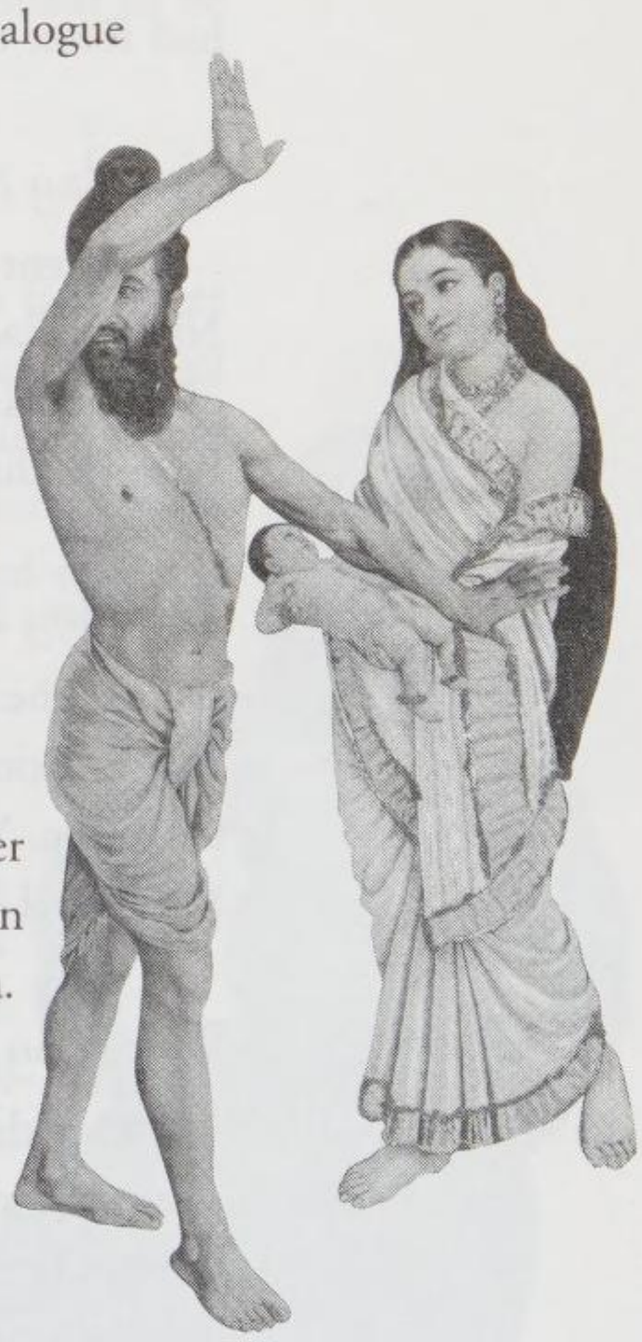
Saturday 16th February 1901

Was glad to receive a telegram from Vasudewan Namputhri Rawat of Badrinath that he was acquitted on appeal. I had been free from fever for two days. Wrote to Dr Thurston the Honorary Secretary to send us a catalogue of the Exhibition which is to open this evening in Madras.

[No entry for 17th February 1901]

Monday 18th February 1901

I went to Mumbra to try to finish my sketch but there are so many details on the sunlit hills in the distance that I could not do anything on the foreground. We drove to Thana in a tonga and from there took train at about 8 p.m. for Bombay.

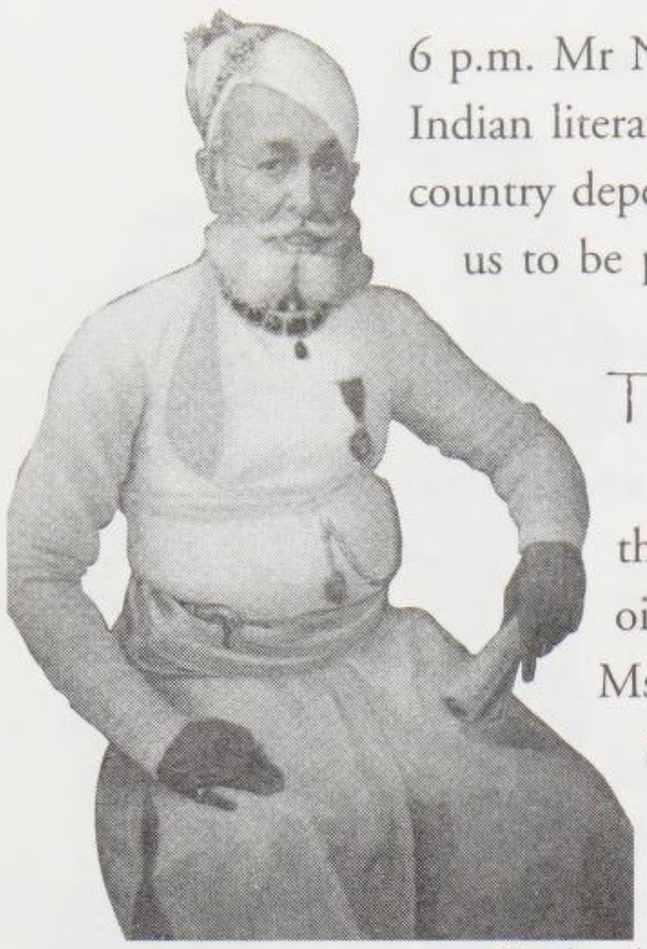


Tuesday 19th February 1901

Early in the morning we heard that a thief attempted to enter one of the sheds inhabited by a Bania. We have to be vigilant in future. The day is very cloudy and so could not go to Mumbra again. Wrote a letter to my cousin K.R.R.

Wednesday 20th February 1901

Having had an appointment to meet Ms Edmund Russel, the great American actor, we paid him a visit at Watson's Annex at



6 p.m. Mr N. Writer was with us. Ms Russel seemed to take a deep interest in Indian literature and art and seemed to think that the future prosperity of the country depended on the revival of her ancient Arts and Industries. He invited us to be present at 'Romeo & Juliet' on Monday as his guests.

Thursday 21st February 1901

I paid a visit to Bombay this afternoon. I was glad to learn from the papers that I got one silver medal for the best figure painting in oil and two highly commended. I was further pleased to learn from Ms Thurston that two of my works had been purchased by the Art Society for its gallery in Madras.

Friday 22nd February 1901

Early this morning we left for Bassien to attend the wedding of Venu—Mr Shriram's niece. The girl having no father he took the part of the father. The bride groom is a brother of our friend Ganapat Rao—Mahratta of the same place. After the marriage rites and feasting were over we returned in the evening at about 8 back to Ghatkopar.

Saturday 23rd February 1901

The last day's trip to Bassien and the feasting there made me very unwell this morning. Towards evening we went out of our hut to finish the open scenery in the picture of 'Sakuntala's Impending Calamity'. On my return I had fever, the temperature rising to 101[.] Towards midnight it left me.

Sunday 24th February 1901

I went in the afternoon to Kalyan and was received at the station by Mr Narayin Rao with whom we became acquainted when he was the Station Master of Khandala. I went to the Ferry and put in a boat in my picture [*sic*] of the Bawo Maling Hill [Bavamalang Hill]. Returned at about 9.30 at night.

Monday 25th February 1901

At the invitation of Ms Edmund Russel we went to the Novelty Theater to see 'Romeo and Juliet'. Miss Janet Waldorf as Gullet [Juliet] was simply charming. We slept when the play was over at the Watson's Hotel Annex where Ms Russel had kindly reserved apartments for us at his expense.

Tuesday 26th February 1901

Our things were packed up in the morning and we left for Bombay in the afternoon and spent the evening at the Hotel as Mr Russel's Guests. He has an unbranded admiration for Brother. We started from the Colaba [Colabar] Terminus, at Palghar there was plague examination.

Wednesday 27th February 1901

We arrived at Ahmedabad in the morning at about 9.20. Drove to the house of Mr Chinabhai Madhavalal whose guests we are. In the afternoon Mr Chimanlal called and gave us four orders for portraits. In the evening we called on him and saw Master Ambalal the boy whose portrait we are to paint.

Thursday 28th February 1901

Mr Chinabhai who has an excellent library gave Cassel's new illustrated edition of the 'National Gallery'[125] for us to see. We found them very interesting. In the morning the boy Ambalal and his guardian came to settle the time for the former's sitting. He is a very fair and handsome boy of about 12.

Friday 1st March 1901

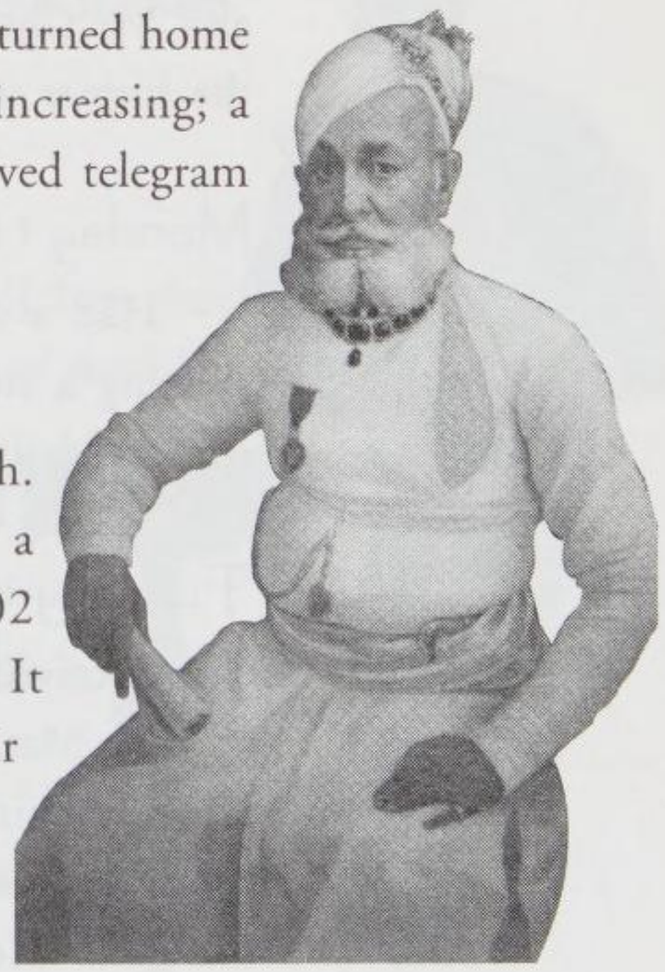
We commenced this morning the boy's portrait, a half length. It is very promising. The boy is the son of the late Mr Sarabhai a rich Jain who died young. His portrait has to be painted by us. In the evening we drove to the Muncipal Hall and the Kankiria Tank.

Saturday 2nd March 1901

This morning we began an other half length of Ms Madhavalal Ramhorilal—Mr Chinubhai's father, an old gentlemen of 60. In the afternoon painted the green velvet coat of the boy Ambalal and his background. The whole picture is soft and harmonious. Only the face and hands remain to be finished.

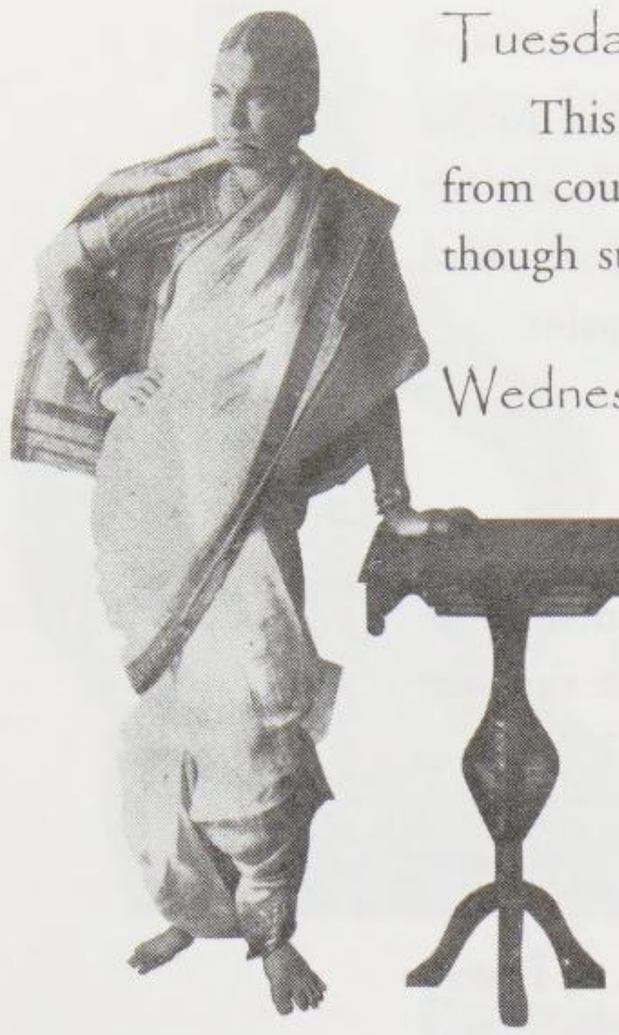
Sunday 3rd March 1901

This morning gave the first coat of colour to Ms Madhavalal's face. Next we went to his house in the city partaking of a truly superior feast, we shall never again go to another. We could like none of the dishes. We returned home with a disordered stomach and very thirsty. The heat is daily increasing; a light shower of rain fell this evening and it was welcome. Received telegram from Mathai—he was suffering only from ordinary fever.



Monday 4th March 1901

My brother suffered last night from cough and felt feverish. This morning we could not do usual work. Brother took a light purgative. In the afternoon his temperature rose to 102 and in the evening it was 104[.] He has aching in the limbs. It is all due to the exposed position in which he slept last night. Mr Chinubhai's family doctor has prescribed a mixture for him. Today in the evening Holi-fire was lit here as in other families.



Tuesday 5th March 1901

This morning Brother's temperature has gone down though he still suffers from cough. In the evening I sketched Mr Chinubhai's head. Brother better though still weak. I am suffering terribly from cough.

Wednesday 6th March 1901

The first coat of colour to Chinubhai's face was given by me and the likeness is good. Received a letter from the Dewan of Multran [Mudhol]—that he would arrange for our halting there on our way to Udaipur. Departure postponed to the 12th.

Thursday 7th March 1901

I felt feverish last night. We could not work, in the afternoon. I became worse and in the evening the temperature rose to 104[.] Dr Soloman Enulkar called in the evening and prescribed a mixture.

Friday 8th March 1901

I am better this morning; the fever has gone down and yet I have a severe cold only. I took my amount of quinine; all work at standstill. Ms Madhavalal gave a second sitting but very little work was done.

Saturday 9th March 1901

This morning we are both much better. Brother's headache and my fever have left us. Mr Chimanlal wants his portrait to be a three quarter and not a bust. The first sketch was made this evening.

Sunday 10th March 1901

We both bathed and feel stronger. Mr Chinubhai gave his second sitting and Mr Chimanlal his first though late in the evening. Visited the library of the former which contains a good collection of standard works.

Monday 11th March 1901

Had a second sitting from Mr Chinubhai in the morning and in the evening a sitting from Mr Chimanlal. The heat is gradually being felt and thirst is daily increasing. In the evening however there is a cool breeze.

Tuesday 12th March 1901

Received a reply from the Director of Public Instructions, Madras to say that the Marathi Primers submitted have been referred to the Book Committee. In the evening drove to Ms Chinubhai's Bungalow in the Camp and returned home after a long drive. Purchased four cholis for the marriage of Mr K.P. Sankaran Menon.

Wednesday 13th March 1901

This morning, Nephew became unwell and we were afraid whether we should be obliged to postpone departure again. We made every arrangement for departure, and towards evening Nephew's health improved. We did not go out in the evening but remained at home packing things [and] getting things ready. Dr S.A. Enulkar declined to charge any fee [for] treating us.

Thursday 14th March 1901

We were up at 4 in the morning and therefore could catch the train at 6. Changed at Anand to the Godhra-Ratlam line. Travelled over this line for the first time. The country hilly and jungly and rises gradually. Ratlam was reached at 4 p.m.; were received on behalf of Durbar by our old friend Rukhmalkji and Mr Imayat Hussain Sheristhadar, Dewan's office. Our lodgings were in a cool and pleasant garden, [the] arrangements were perfect. Visited the Raja and his Dewan Mr Curselji Rustamji in the evening at 7. Enjoyed rest from the fatigues of the journey.

Friday 15th March 1901

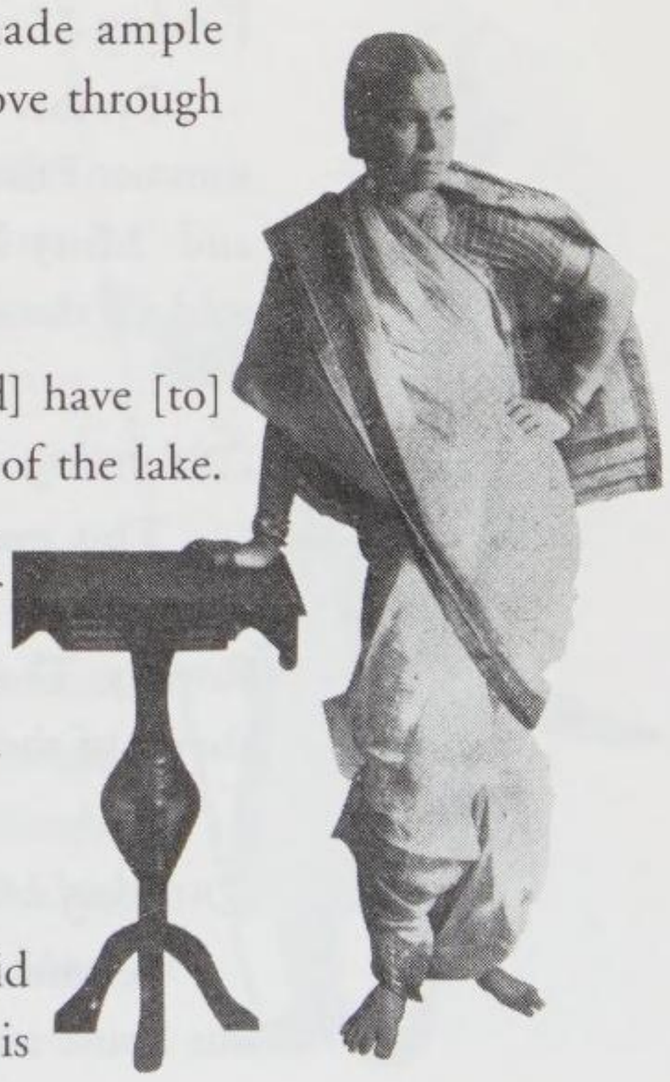
Left Ratlam early in the morning and arrived at Chitorgadh in the evening at 5. The old fort celebrated in history rose in front of us; but we could not visit it owing to the late arrival of the train. We put up at the waiting room taking our meals in a small serai. Slept at night in the 1st class compartment in which we were to travel.

Saturday 16th March 1901

Leaving Chitorgadh at 4 a.m. we arrived at Udaipur at 9 a.m. The city is built in the midst of hills on the shores of a lake. We drove to our residence in Durbari carriages. We were first disappointed with the house we were provided with; but its beautiful situation on the brink of the lake made ample amends for the short-comings of the place. In the evening we drove through the public gardens, a cool and beautifully laid out park.

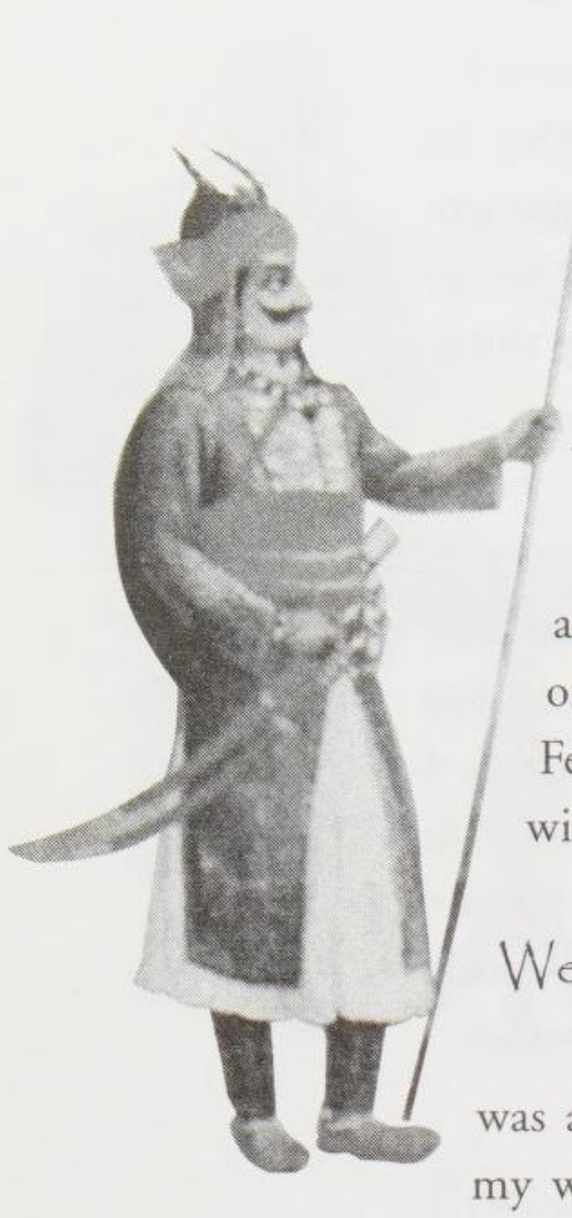
Sunday 17th March 1901

This is my 41st birthday and I never expected that I [would] have [to] spend this day at Udaipur. I had a plunge bath in the cool waters of the lake. I began a sketch of the city on the other side of the lake in the morning. In the evening we crossed in a boat to the place to the other side of the lake and saw the Durbar Hall and the new palace being built. The inlaid work is beautiful. Mr Hamir Singh showed us round.



Monday 18th March 1901

This evening we crossed over to the palace at about 7 and paid a visit to H.H. the Maharana Saheb. He is past middle age and is



dark complexioned. He speaks no language except Hindi in which he conversed with us. He received us in the old style squatting on a Gadi. After we had presented Nazar of a few rupees which were touched and remitted we also squatted on the carpet. Hamir Singh was present and introduced us to His Highness.

Tuesday 19th March 1901

We visited the summer palaces on the lake. They are built of marble and are very beautiful. We next went and saw the wild boars being fed on the hill skirting the lake. I never saw such a large herd of them before. Feeding wild boars is a unique institution here and they come and feed with immunity.

Wednesday 20th March 1901

From to-day's papers we learned that H.H. our late first prince's Prize was awarded to Brother for 'Sakuntala's Impending Calamity' and one of my works was highly commended in this year's Bombay Exhibition. We visited in the evening the Dewan of Baroda who has come on a visit and also Mr Harbhanji Sahib.

Thursday 21st March 1901

A cloudy morning a few drops of rain fell. In the evening drove to the Public Garden. The tigers are the largest I have seen. Two out of three cubs were tied by ropes and dragged out for taming, amidst the roars of the mother tiger from the adjoining cage. Saw Ms Hamir Singh and settled the size of the portrait we are commissioned by the Durbar to paint. Wrote to my wife.

Friday 22nd March 1901

Brother not feeling well we did not go out. I began a small sketch of the summer Palace. Learnt from A.K. Joshi and Co. that my pictures 'Native Shops' and 'Misty Morning Bombay' were highly commended, that the latter was sold on the day of the opening of the Exhibition of the 'Bombay Art Society'.

Saturday 23rd March 1901

This evening was the Gangor Procession.[126] 1st day when the Maharana went out in state in a boat over the lake accompanied by all paraphernalia of Royalty. The scene was striking; at nightfall there was [*sic*] fireworks on the shores of the lake.

Sunday 24th March 1901

Second day of Gangor Procession. We witnessed it from the balcony of our house and I tried to make a sketch of the scene as it was so beautiful and

charming. The festival is in honour of Gauri whose images are borne by women to the lake.

Monday 25th March 1901

This is the third day of the Gangor. We went to the Tripolia Gate underneath which the procession passes. We had a bird's eye view of the whole scene from the top of the gate. The Europeans were seated in the lower storey of the gate.

Tuesday 26th March 1901

The last day of the festivities we went in a boat with the procession. The Maharana's boat was a long one and was each day decked out in a different colour of the turbans and waist-bands of the Prince and his nobles being similar to the decoration of the boat.

Wednesday 27th March 1901

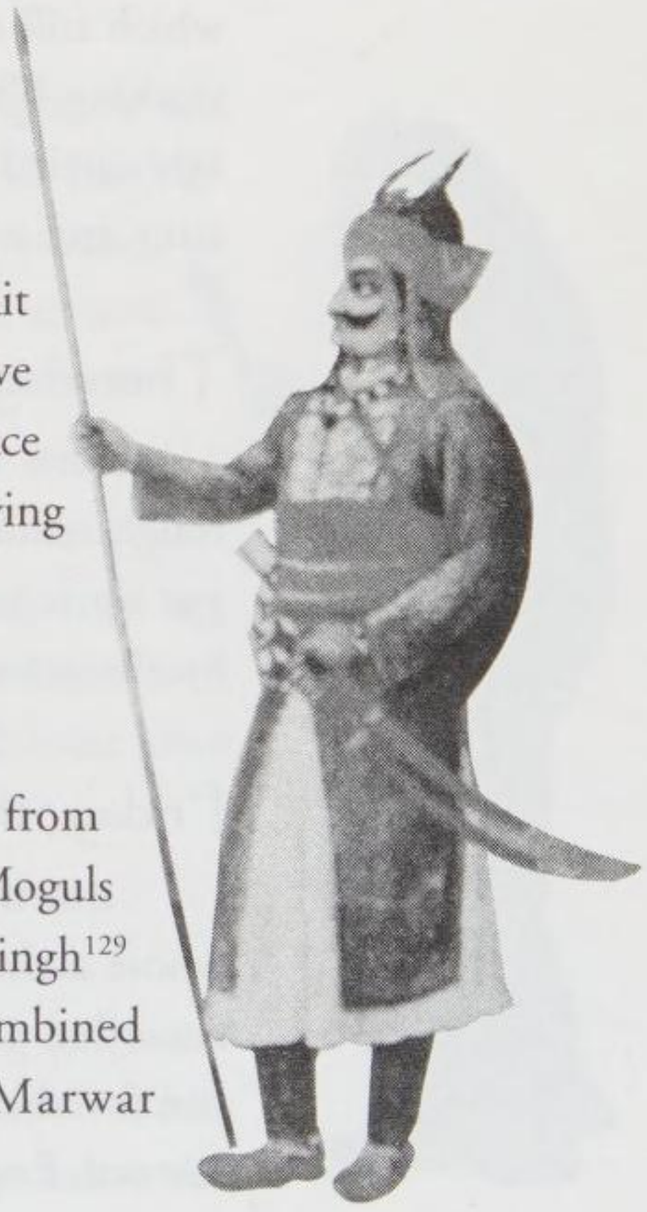
I am trying to finish the sketch of the Gangor procession from memory. The background I am able to do from nature. With regard to the festival what struck me was a want of illumination after nightfall. Fireworks, of course, there are.

Thursday 28th March 1901

Today we received a letter from Mr Victor Sockl a European who wanted to see Brother about some paintings. Saying he would arrive here today. On enquiring we learnt that he had put up at the Dawk [Dak] Bangalow[127] where we shall meet him tomorrow evening.

Friday 29th March 1901

Mr Hamir Singh called in the morning to speak about the portrait of Runjit Singh. In the evening visited Mr Sockl and then we drove to the new palace and garden below the Fateh Sagar Lake. The palace with its beautifully laid out gardens and innumerable fountains playing is a cool summer resort.



Saturday 30th March 1901

I have been reading since our arrival here the history of Mewar from Todd's Rajasthan.[128] The struggles of its brave princes against the Moguls for independence will incite the admiration of every reader. Pratap Singh[129] was indeed one of the greatest heroes and he fought against the combined armies of the Great Akbar and the other Rajput chiefs of Marwar and Amber.

Sunday 31st March 1901

We are now painting or rather copying from an old painting a life size portrait of Raj Singh one of the worthiest successors of Pratap. There is very little of nature in the old painting being painted in the old conventional style, face profile and feet turned in the same direction. As His Highness wants to preserve this style we are only copying it as it is.

Monday 1st April 1901

It is gratifying to find that the Maharana has got paintings in the old style of almost all the brave ancestors he had from Pratap Singh downwards. They are certainly of great historical value and all native chiefs ought to follow this example as a state without past traditions and ancestry must be very low in moral stamina.

Tuesday 2nd April 1901

Wrote and posted a letter to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy on behalf of Brother offering to the Nation's Gallery in memory of the late Queen to be erected in Calcutta[130] four oil paintings two portraits and two subject pictures from Indian History in addition to a sum of Rs 500 to the Imperial Fund. Visited the palace in the evening to take the measurement of the wall where our picture is to be hung. Hamir Singhji was present.

Wednesday 3rd April 1901

Nephew has got symptoms of Dysentery and a medical man from the palace came and prescribed medicine. In the afternoon he got fever 102 degrees which still continues. We did not on his account go out but remained at home working. The very name of dysentery is now frightful as it had only five months ago carried off five members of our family at Kilimanur including our dear aunt and niece.

Thursday 4th April 1901

It has been very windy for the last three days and the lake becomes very rough reminding us of the backwaters of Travancore. The place where we have put up is just on the western shore of the lake and our garden walls are lashed by the waves. This house which is an old one belongs...

Friday 5th April 1901

...to the Raja of Amit, one of the sixteen first class Sirdars of the state on whose arrival in [the] Durbar the Maharana rises from his seat, an honour not accorded to others. The house through in disrepair now, was once a very comfortable one. The present Raja of Amit we hear is a young man and has learned English.

Saturday 6th April 1901

We met Mr Fatehlal Mehta, with whom we had a long correspondence on the subject of our visit to this state at the Public Gardens. He had returned only the day before from pilgrimage. He introduced us to the Resident who was engaged in a game at Cricket.

Sunday 7th April 1901

There was another Gangor procession this evening. Yesterday it appears was the birth day of the God of Ekling[131] and there were sports in the arena. We saw the procession from the terrace of our house. It was a repetition of these we had seen before.

Monday 8th April 1901

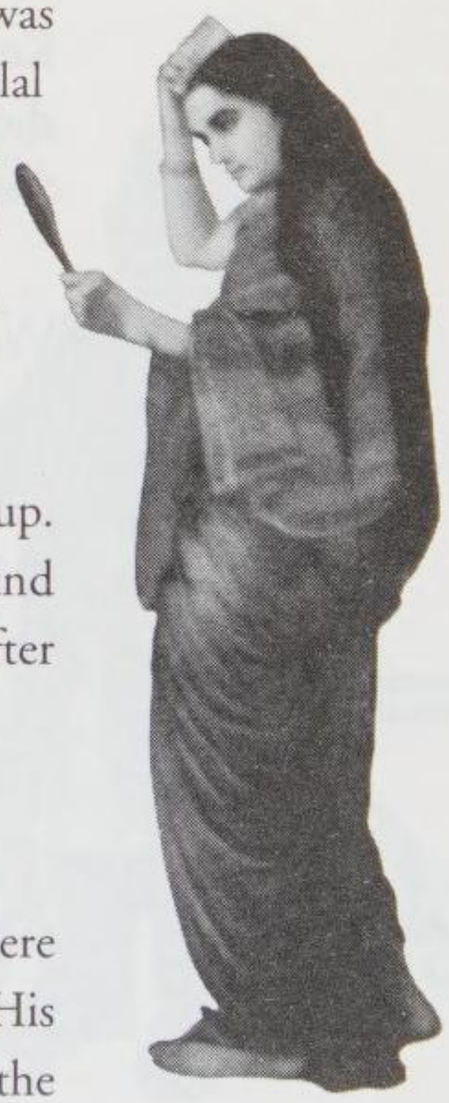
Ms Fatehlal called on us this morning. He is the son of Rai Pannalal C.I S. late Dewan of Udaipur. Fatehlal is an accomplished young man and seems to be in high favour with the Maharana. He liked our painting of Raj Singh and has promised to appoint a time for showing it to His Highness.

Tuesday 9th April 1901

We learnt with extreme sorrow from the papers about the death of Ms Madhavalal Ramhorilal, the father of Chinubhai our friend. He was only about 60 years of age and when we left Ahmedabad he was in good health. But on the 4th instant he died suddenly of heart disease. He was a very charitable and good man. Sent telegram of condolence to Mr Chinubhai.

Wednesday 10th April 1901

At about 10 this morning we received information that His Highness was ready to see us and the picture of Raj Singh. We went accordingly. Mr Fatehlal met us and we awaited the arrival of the Maharana in the western veranda of the Durbar Hall. His Highness did not make any criticism and seemed to like the work. Ms Fatehlal will let us know if any more orders there are.



Thursday 11th April 1901

We were expecting Mr Fatehlalji in the morning, but he did not turn up. In the evening we took a drive through the park visiting the museum and menagerie and on return home[,] Learnt that Fatehlalji had called soon after our departure.

Friday 12th April 1901

Having heard from Fatehlalji we called on him in the evening and were introduced to Rai Pannalal, a grave looking old gentleman Fatehlal told us His Highness has at last consented to sit for a full length but wanted to know the

price; what we said was Rs 1800. He said that orders for copying three old pictures will also be given.

Saturday 13th April 1901

This afternoon we went to the Jagnivas[132] water palace and made a sketch of the Marble Hall. Mr Fatehlal came here with three photos of His Highness[133] out of which we were asked to select one for the portrait in oils. We made our choice and he left. We rowed back to our residence in the evening. Today is Visha[?]

Sunday 14th April 1901

We went again this afternoon to Jagnivas and progressed with our sketch. The Maharana we heard had gone to Eklingji to worship. Tomorrow being Monday and Ekadasi.[134] We returned as the sun was going down the hills.

Monday 15th April 1901

As usual we visited Jagnivas; in the evening as we were returning we saw a large number of water crows[135] which dive in water as well as fly. The following birds common in Malabar and especially Kilimanur are found here: Sparrow, Mynas and Doves[136] very frequently by day and night. I hear the first named bird and then think of my early days in Kilimanur.

Tuesday 16th April 1901

Brother's Birthday. There was a feast to which no outsider was invited. In the evening Mr Fatehlal came and said as His Highness will be leaving for Komulgadh on Friday he would sit on his return, that in the meantime we should paint or copy the portraits of the Great Pratap Singh, his son Amara Sing and Jaising—Raj Singh's son.

Wednesday 17th April 1901

This morning Ms Fatehlal called again and supplied us with the necessary information regarding the height [and] colour of the old kings we were going to paint[.] I think very few in Travancore will be able to say as much regarding H.H. Marthanda Varma to whom the state owes its present dimensions.

Thursday 18th April 1901

We repeated our visit to Jagnivas to sketch the old Marble Hall[137] which is mellow with age and is beautiful to paint. On our return we witnessed from the lake a sunset as such we have not seen of late. Every part of the sky was worth painting. The west was all gold and purple.

Friday 19th April 1901

H.H. The Maharana left for Komulgadha[138] a fort about 5000 feet high towards the west. I commenced another sketch of the lake and city from the Jagnivas. The weather here is still far from sultry, considering the season of the year. In the afternoon high winds rise and continue till evening. The young mangoes in the tree in our garden are being scattered by the wind.

Saturday 20th April 1901

Mr Fatehlal called in the morning with a learned old gentleman whom the Maharana wants us to consult with regard to the painting of the armour in Pratap's portrait. We shall go and see the armoury on Monday morning. Visited Jagnivas again in the evening. Received a letter from Janaki dated 23rd Meenam.

Sunday 21st April 1901

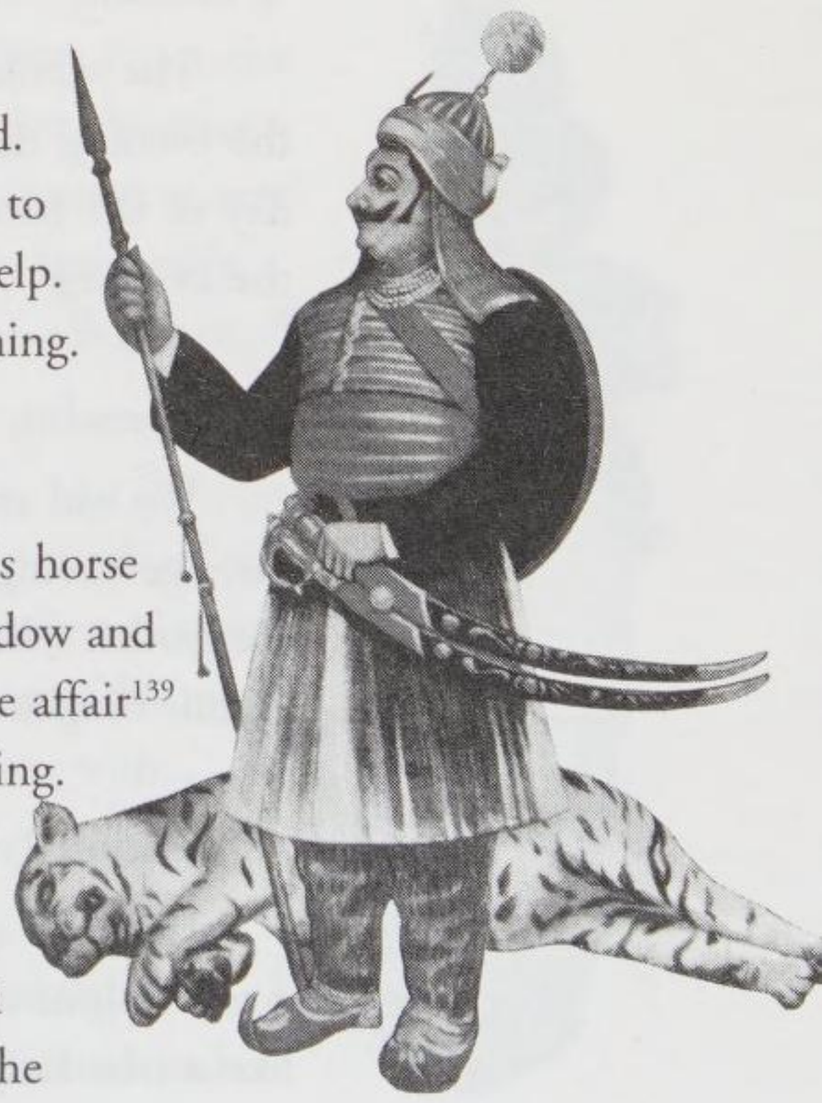
I went to Jagnivas at about 3 and remained painting the view of the city and the lake till 5.30. A Rajput young widow with her infant son has been staying in a part of this haveli for some days past. She has come here to complain to the Maharana about the wrongful attachment of her property by some more powerful chief in whose Jaghi she lives.

Monday 22nd April 1901

This morning we paid a visit to the state armoury in the Palace. We were received by Mr Fatehlal and shown round. An old sword was shown us as having been wielded by the Great Pratap. The collection of arms is large and kept in good order. The man in charge is a native of Bikaner having come here during the life time of the late Maharana.

Tuesday 23rd April 1901

The Rajput lady of whom I spoke before belongs to Jangad. Her son a boy of 7 or 8 constantly comes to us having nothing to do. We feel great interest in them and wish to do them some help. Sent my cheque for cashing. Hamir Singh's son called in the evening.



Wednesday 24th April 1901

Early in the morning Mr Fatehlal called and I sketched his horse in my picture of the gateway behind us. We told him about the widow and her son and he has promised to speak to His Highness about the affair[139] on his return. I finished my sketch from the Jagnivas this evening.

Thursday 25th April 1901

This evening we had a pleasant swim in the lake. We visited its western most shores among the hills through which flows the

river which feeds the lake. We next visited another building where wild boars are daily fed but here their number was not as large as [at] the other.

Friday 26th April 1901

Today I went again with nephew to Jagnivas and changed the water in my sketch to a calm surface with reflections of the buildings in it. It is certainly a great improvement as water in motion is difficult to paint.

Saturday 27th April 1901

I took a walk in the garden laying to the west of our residence. It belongs to a Jain and is kept in good condition; a fine view of Jagnivas and other island palaces is obtained from here. His Highness returned from Komulgadh this evening. Owing to the heat I slept on the terrace.

Sunday 28th April 1901

There is a gradual increase in the heat, though at this time it is very much greater in other places. The lake Pichola which surround[s] us on three sides is a great blessing in this weather. The Public Gardens too in the evenings are very cool and pleasant.

Monday 29th April 1901

Ms Fatehlal called in the evening, the Maharana having asked him to see what progress we are making with the portraits. The works are only half finished and still would take a week to finish. The two orders in hand are the portraits [of] Ranas Amar Singh and Jey Singh.

Tuesday 30th April 1901

The whole day was close[?] and cloudy. The hottest day we had here. In the evening the servants were ordered to go to see the Taboots being the last day of the Moharram.[140] The Taboots were immersed in the lake very late in the evening.

Wednesday 1st May 1901

We had an appointment to meet Ms Fatehlal in his house at 5.30 but the carriage having come very late we could not keep it. We however met him in the garden where we remained till 7 o'clock. On the way back we called at Ms Hamir Singh's but he was not at home.

Thursday 2nd May 1901

Fatehlalji called in the morning with a chain armour and helmet and also a tall Rajput as a model.[141] We sketched him fully accoutred and he looked like a true knight of old. Pratap Singh is to be painted in this costume.

Friday 3rd May 1901

The day was cloudy and at noon there was a drizzling rain. In the evening the tall Rajput appeared again, and his sketch was finished. Of course we had given him Pratap's face. We wonder how in ancient times the heroes had fought in their armour, so heavy they are.

Saturday 4th May 1901

The day was very squally and showering and the night equally so. The lake is made very rough and noisy and resembles the Parur Backwater in a storm. We went in the evening to the Public Gardens where the resident Ms Fatehlal and others were having a game at cricket. On the way back we visited Hamir Singhji. The evening cool.

Sunday 5th May 1901

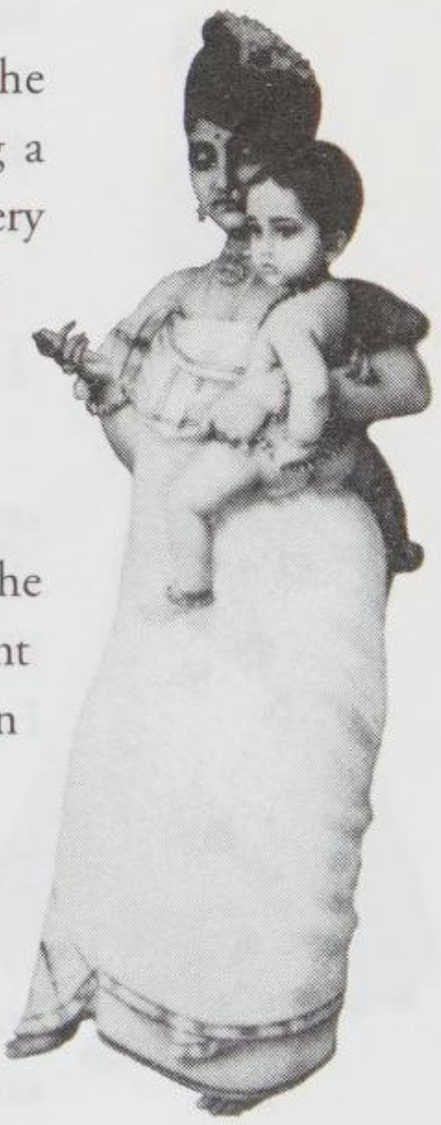
Mr Fatehlal brought us to him and introduced to us the son of the Maharana's Purohit[142] a family as old as the Chauhan King of Delhi.[143] The young man wants to learn painting and we told him that we shall render him such help as he requires in case he would spend some part of the year in Bombay with us.

Monday 6th May 1901

Our sketch of Pratap Singh was approved of by His Highness generally, though he made some suggestion for alterations. The Maharana we have heard is always very particular in definitely settling every detail before entrusting a work to another so that there may not be any dispute afterwards.

Tuesday 7th May 1901

Received by post two cases of sketches with their criticisms from the Sketching Club, Madras. One of Weldon's sketches of an interior showing a kettle in the fire and two girls at work is very spirited and the colouring is very good. My sketch of the interior of the Karli Railway Station is favourably noticed and also my 'Extensive View' representing the Backbay—Bombay.



Wednesday 8th May 1901

Regarding my 'Interior' the English artist who criticises the work of the members of the Sketching Club writes thus 'This work conveys capitally a pleasant feeling of shade and cool reflected by light and quietude, the drawing of [a] man writing is very good and [the] pose easy and natural and in harmony with...

Thursday 9th May 1901

...[the] general sentiment of the picture. The colour is pleasant and the touches of light on various objects [are] well drawn and considered and

crisply put on—and in good keeping of tone and colour.' Of my view of the Backbay, Bombay he speaks favourably about every thing except the mass of black rock in the foreground.

Friday 10th May 1901

Remitted by today's post in a registered cover currency note for Rs 60 and postage stamps for Rs 2 my subscriptions for the Bombay Gazette. In the evening had a row to the southern extremity of the lake Pichola and the view of the city and palaces was so beautiful that it looked like a picture. I want to paint it anyhow.

Saturday 11th May 1901

This afternoon there was a heavy thunder and hailstorm followed by a copious shower. This is the third time I see hail, the stones today were small. The weather which had been getting warmer since the last shower has again cooled down considerably. The rain continued till late in the evening.

Sunday 12th May 1901

The weather still cloudy and threatening. The day was very warm & oppressive. Posted a letter to my wife as I have not written to her for nearly a month. I am now reading 'Roasselet's India and its Princes'. He speaks very highly of the scenery of the city and the lake. He visited the state in 1864 during...

Monday 13th May 1901

...Shamby Singh Rana's reign. Mr Vat Prinsep R.A. who visited Udaipur in the next reign—that of Sajjan Singh—immediately after the Delhi Assemblage[144] and who looked with an artist's eye was equally charmed with the scenery of the place. I have lately been reading his impressions of his visits to the several native states.

Tuesday 14th May 1901

Capt. Pinhey the resident who had promised to visit our studio in the morning at 7.30 failed to keep his promise. At 10 went to the Palace and showed the Maharana the finished portraits of Amar Singh and Jaysingh and His Highness expressed his approval. In the evening Rai Pannalal C.I.C. Ms Fatehlal's father and his uncle called to see the pictures.

Wednesday 15th May 1901

This morning the Resident called at about 8 and saw the paintings. He was much pleased with them especially with my sketches of local scenery. He said that his brother was the Collector of Malabar and his wife we know is an

amateur artist and exhibits in the Madras Fine Arts Exhibitions. He left after about half an hour.

Thursday 16th May 1901

This morning a deputation consisting of some sardars—learned men of the court—called at our studio to suggest alterations at His Highness's order. One of the local Artists Kunnallal[145] who has visited England once and who is awfully jealous of us spoke disparagingly of our own work and my nephew challenged him to try his skill with us. He was at once humbled and he departed crestfallen.

Friday 17th May 1901

This morning Ms Fatehlal our friend invited us to an evening party in his beautiful garden. His father and uncles were present. Two Mohamedans sang very well till about 8.30. They are the servants of the state and settled here during the last Maharana's reign. The evening was one of the most agreeable and pleasant we ever had.

Saturday 18th May 1901

Most people here use intoxicants, opium, bhang or toddy. Bhang they drink mixed in cool water along with spices and sugar as a hot weather drink. This is the reason why Rajputana produces few men of intellectual eminence, 'As fighting men they were superior'.

Sunday 19th May 1901

This morning at 11 His Highness gave us a sitting at Sambhunivas for a small sketch of his head. He wants this—I think—as a trial to see how far we succeed with his likeness. Mr Fatehlal was present. The likeness will become exact in the next sitting.

Monday 20th May 1901

There was no sitting from His Highness today. Monday being sacred to God Mahadeo—the Maharana's titular deity—is observed as a holiday here. It was there fore said that His Highness who is inordinately fond of hunting would have some sports today, but he did not go out.

Tuesday 21st May 1901

We had another sitting from his Highness this morning and the likeness is good. The Maharana is too shrewd a man to express his opinion on any thing off hand. We shall know what he thinks of it by and by. The sitting over he dressed himself and started for the adjacent hills for a little shooting in the hot sun.

Wednesday 22nd May 1901

Today His Highness went to Jagnivas in the morning and returned to the palace only at about 6 in the evening. Though his beard has turned grey he regularly dyes it with Mehendi[146] leafs [*sic*] of which there are two sorts one red and [one] black. The application of these alternatively makes the hair of a purplish dark colour which lasts for a week or so.

Thursday 23rd May 1901

This evening we went to one of the neighbouring hills to make a sketch of a background for Rana Pratap Singh's portrait. In the afternoon a heavy dust-storm accompanied by a shower passed by. The air becomes suffocating after a dust-storm unless rain follows.

Friday 24th May 1901

We had a third sitting from His Highness this morning and the sketch is ready. The likeness is very faithful. I think the order for the Maharana's life size portrait will be given us in a day or two, for he seemed pleased with the sketch though he did not express any opinion one way or the other.

Saturday 25th May 1901

This morning Ms Fatehlalji[147] took with him all our sketches of local scenery in charcoal to be shown to His Highness. He did not return them till evening. [+++] There are plenty of scorpions in Udaipur and one must be careful if he wishes not to be stung. Those that I saw are of a white colour and are smaller in size than the black sort.

Sunday 26th May 1901

Just as I was leaving in the boat for sketching Ms Fatehlal arrived with two Bhils (aboriginal tribe inhabiting the Aravali and Vindhya mountains). They are the banditte [bandits][148] of these places and in some of their traits and characteristics resemble the Maravars[149] of Southern India. I commenced a sketch of the town as seen from the opposite shore of the lake. The Maharana liked our sketches and studies and also his likeness.

Monday 27th May 1901

Today we received a long letter from Mr E. Russel from Agra and as desired by him have written to the Dewan of Ratalam. Brother made a sketch of a Bhil woman[150] in the afternoon while I went to Khasodi to attend to my landscape. The view of the city from here is comprehensive and most charming. Venku is unwell and so has been Ayappan[151] for two weeks. Heat extreme.

Tuesday 28th May 1901

Towards afternoon there was a passage of Locusts near the city. Hundreds of millions of them filled the air. Those flying high up appearing like clouds lit up by the sun. This is the fist time I see these swarms of destructive insects. Though it was rather late I went to Khasodi to sketch. The picture is very promising.

Wednesday 29th May 1901

I went this morning again to Khasodi to work on my landscape. Today is Ekadasi of a peculiar sacredness and all people observe fast here. Some do not even drink water though the weather is very hot. From Ratlam a telegram was received to say that the Maharaja does not find it convenient to see Mr Russel's acting. At night we received his telegram asking if he might come here, but the Maharana will not patronise him and we replied to that effect.

Thursday 30th May 1901

The delay in commencing the Maharana's portrait worries us much. He wants to settle the minutest detail before the work is begun and a day is spent in deciding each detail. Every one in our camp is tired of the stay here and wants to get back home as early as possible. The heat is intense.

Friday 31st May 1901

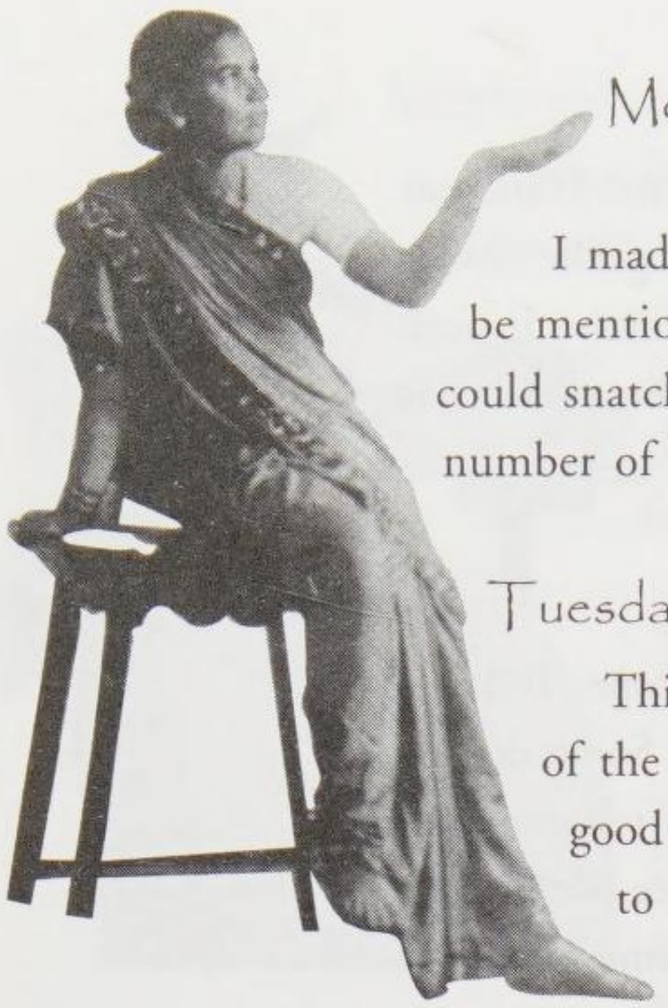
Brother went alone this morning to the Palace and took measurements of the Maharana's face and height. Life size portrait of the Maharana was commenced today. In the evening we drove to the only respectable shop here owned by a Parsee, and then went to the Public Garden where we met Fatehlalji.

Saturday 1st June 1901

In the evening I went again to Khasodi to sketch. Appay's health again has been deranged. He had an attack of asthma after an interval of four or five months. Ayappan's health too continues unsatisfactory. This is no doubt a source of uneasiness. With the approach of rain the health of all will improve, not till then.

Sunday 2nd June 1901

Since the commencement of this year I have made in all about fourteen sketches and studies of which four were done in Bombay and the remaining ten at Udaipur. The former four were exhibited in Bombay and two of them were highly commended. The fourteen sketches were in addition to my more serious...



Monday 3rd June 1901

...work of assisting my brother in his portraits. Of the sketches I made only one is a figure study, the rest are all landscapes. It must be mentioned that these sketches were made during the spare hours I could snatch from our serious work. Udaipur offers a wide scope for any number of landscape studies.

Tuesday 4th June 1901

This morning Rev. Dr Shepherd and Mr Lillie—the superintendent of the local railway—called to see the pictures. The former who is a good physician of considerable practice here was consulted with regard to Appay's state of health. He insisted on our instant removal to a drier and better ventilated house if his treatment should have any effect. He is an exceedingly good man.

Wednesday 5th June 1901

We have got the permission of the Durbar to remove to what is called here Wingate's Bungalow—a spacious and well furnished house on the top of a hill overlooking the Fateh Sagar Lake. Dr Shepherd called again this morning and in the evening we removed to our new residence. Appay's health is still very bad but it is a consolation we have got a good doctor to treat him.

Thursday 6th June 1901

We feel much more comfortable here than in Amir House. This afternoon there are signs of the approach of the monsoon, there is a strong westerly wind, there was drizzling rain accompanied by thunder. Appay has no fever today. Mr Hamir Singhji called in the evening to enquire if we were comfortable here.

Friday 7th June 1901

This evening we received a telegram from eldest cousin that the Elaya Raja of Travancore expired last evening of Diabetes—a very sad news. What a calamity to Travancore to lose her two only remaining Princes within so short a time of each other. We had not even dreamt of such a thing taking place.

Saturday 8th June 1901

The news of the death of the Elaya Raja in his prime weighs on me heavily. That amiable Prince before he was estranged from his parents and us by Ranga Rao has great affection and regard for me and my cousin K.R.R. as we had been classmates and companions from early boyhood...

Sunday 9th June 1901

...We owe our education to Mr Ranga Rao no doubt, but he has forfeited all claims to our respect and gratitude by his subsequent treatment of us which was shameful in the extremes. The prince was only a tool in this man's hands and he made him do all sorts of foolish things...

Monday 10th June 1901

...He was made to hate his dear mother—the late Junior Rani[152]—and all his relations and friends like us simply because his treacherous adviser wanted to keep the Prince in his hands to promote his own selfish motives. Now the man's hopes and ambitions are shattered as a just punishment for his crimes. The wound caused by the death of Prince Martanda Varma just 8 months ago is still fresh in my heart.

Tuesday 11th June 1901

Prince Martanda Varma, when he was alive used to correspond with me very regularly and he took a deep interest in hearing from me all about the places we have visited. Unlike his brother he was quite independent of favouritism or the influence of favourites—a quality most necessary in a prince. What a pity that not one of the four princes—the sons of the late Junior Rani—lives to rule over Travancore.

Wednesday 12th June 1901

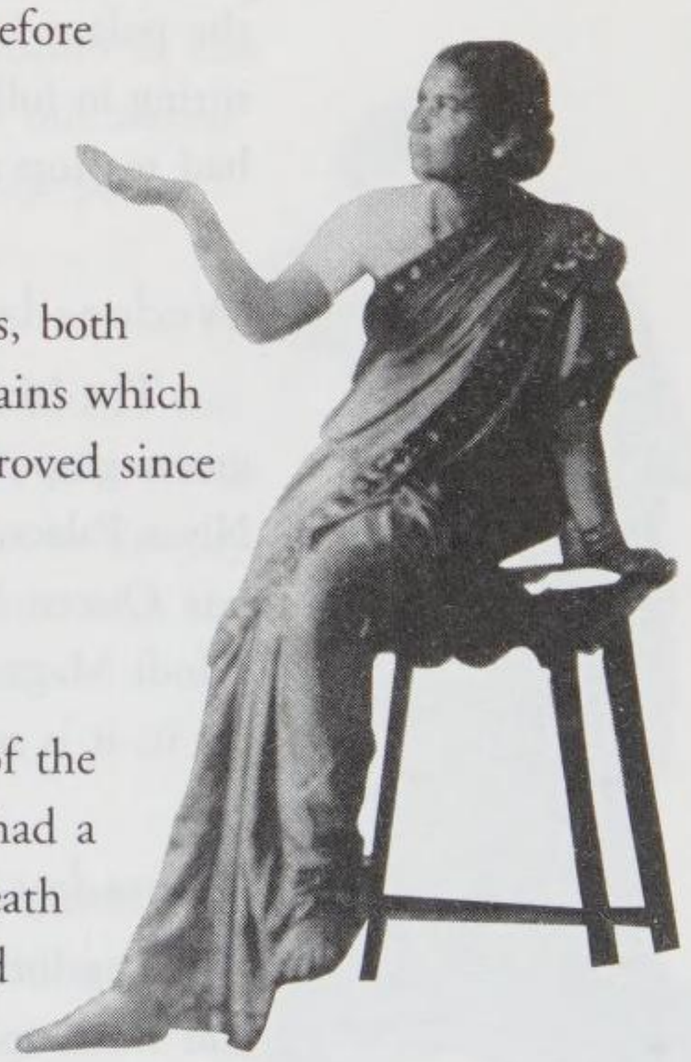
This evening we called on the Rev. Dr Shepherd who lives close by. He has been here for nearly 30 years and he is the first missionary who has established a Mission House here. His native city is Aberdeen in Scotland. He is so good a man that he is liked by all here. Appay's recovery is due to his skilful treatment. The weather has become cooler since the day before yesterday.

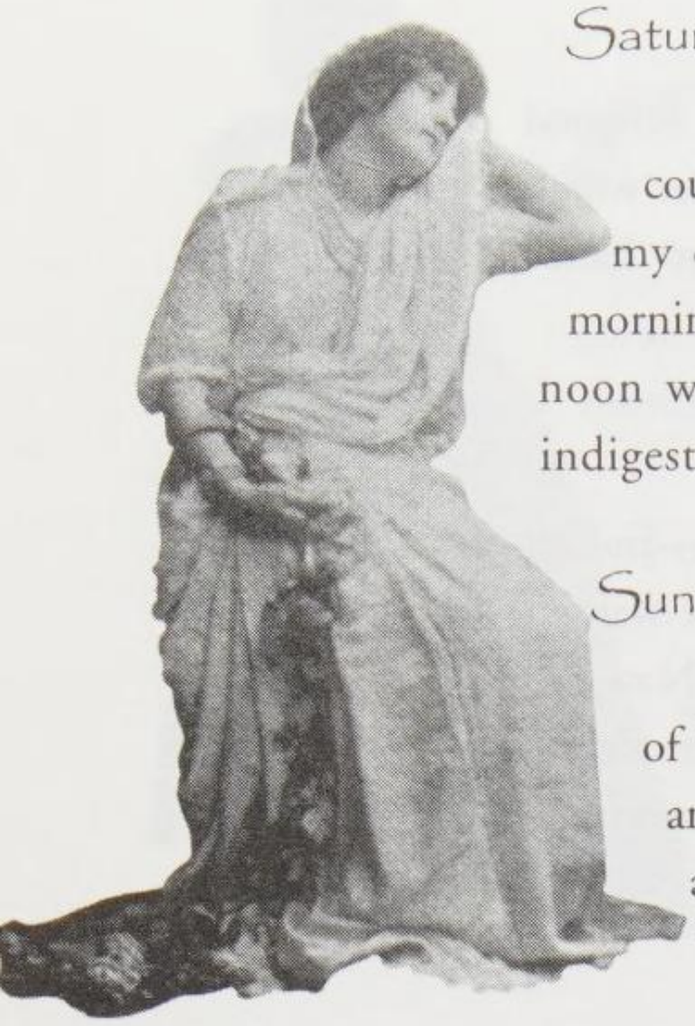
Thursday 13th June 1901

A heavy westerly wind has been flowing for the last two days, both night and morning making the heat bearable. No signs yet of the rains which they say are later this year than usual. The health of all has improved since our removal from Amir House.

Friday 14th June 1901

Received a letter from Nephew Kerala Varma giving details of the Elaya Raja's illness and death. The day previous to his death he had a shave and paid a visit to the Resident. The immediate cause of death was the passing of an unusual quantity of urine which was followed by prostration and death.





Saturday 15th June 1901

This morning I felt very sick and also last night I felt giddy and could not even walk for fear of falling down. I vomited once before taking my coffee. Dr Shepherd and Mr Jameson—his assistant—called in the morning to see our pictures. After their departure I slept till about 12 o'clock noon when I got up refreshed and my head clear. The cause is I think indigestion.

Sunday 16th June 1901

Mr G.E. Lillie paid us a visit this morning. He is the superintendant of the Udaipur State Railway. In the evening Ms Pannalal the Ex-Dewan and Fatehlal called on us. A telegram addressed to Brother was brought at about 5.30, but on opening it, it was found that the contents were indeed for another man and related to certain wedding arrangements. We returned it to the peon and asked him to bring back our own. He has not returned till we retired at night.

Monday 17th June 1901

Early this morning the telegram was brought to us and it contained the awful news of another calamity of Travancore and its Royal Family, the death of Her Highness the Senior Rani C.I. [C.S.I].[153] This was what was expected. The shock produced by the Elaya Raja's death acted as powerfully on her already enfeebled body that she could not survive the loss. May God have mercy on us. What successive blows.

Tuesday 18th June 1901

The portrait of Pratap Singh and H.H. the Maharana were removed to the palace last evening and this morning at eleven. His Highness gave us a sitting in full dress. It was a sitting only in name. He got soon tired, so that we had to stop after making [only] some of the ornaments he had on.

Wednesday 19th June.

The Maharana sent us last evening a present of fruits consisting of seedless green grapes and excellent mangoes. We went this morning to the Sambu Nivas Palace to paint the Maharana's portrait. I am reading an account of the late Queen Empresse's life in Hindi published in the 'Saraswati' a monthly Hindi Magazine issued from the Indrani Press at Allahabad. I must subscribe for it, it is so interesting.

Thursday 20th June 1901

The local language is a mixture of corrupt Hindi, Gujerati and Mahratti and when spoken by the lower class of people is difficult to be understood. It

is called after the country 'Mewari'.[154] The educated and higher order of men speak a 'Hindi' which is taught in schools. Ms Fatehlal came at about 7 in the evening and said the Maharana would give us a sitting the next morning.

Friday 21st June 1901

We had another sitting from the Maharana this morning at 11, and we afterwards brought the picture home with us. The row on the lake in the morning is interesting to an artist. The ghauts or beautiful stone steps are filled with bathers of both sexes. The women who walk along the street so closely veiled strip themselves almost naked and indulge in bathing or washing without any sign of modesty.

Saturday 22nd June 1901

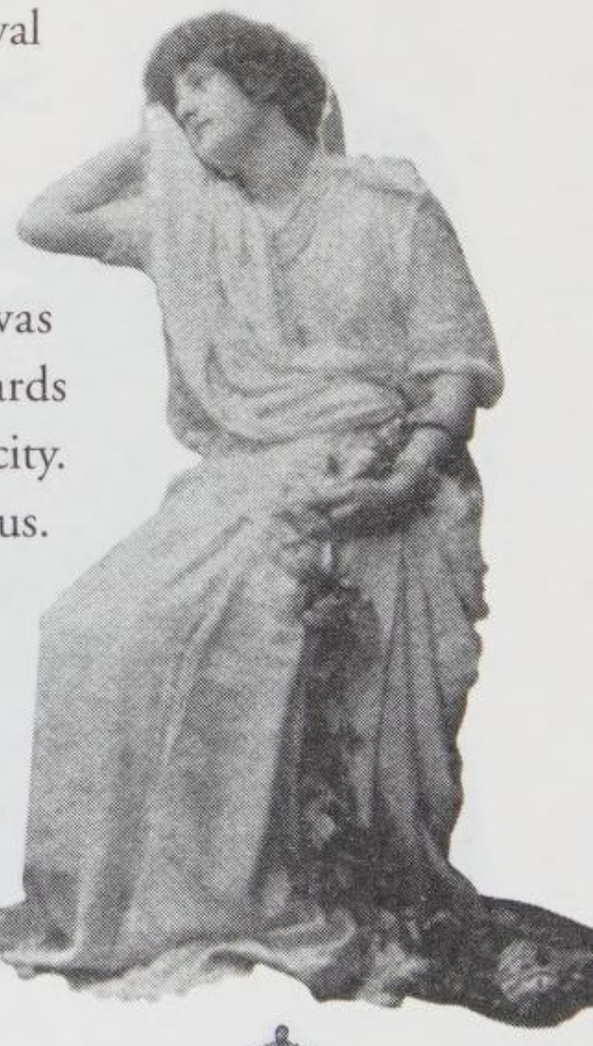
We learnt today from Kilimanur of the death of old Nambiar. My cousin Ithammar[155] from whose letter we heard of it first announcing the event in the following witty lines:[156]

> As a slanderer no body was
> better than him.
> After death and before God,
> he continues to be unbeaten.

He had such a slanderous tongue that he was called 'Narada'.[157] In the evening we had a drive to the park and we met the Maharana driving in a carriage and four, accompanied [by] three more full of his friends.

Sunday 23rd June 1901

Mr Shobhanath and his relations, who had gone to Bikaner for the former's marriage called this morning, having returned a couple of days ago. The young man's father occupies the hereditary post of master of ceremonies at the Maharana's court. He has been practising drawing under us since our arrival here, though owing to the marriage he had to leave it for some days past.



Monday 24th June 1901

This evening we went to Ms Fatehlal's garden where his father was photographed under our direction by a local photographer. We afterwards walked through the garden, which is one of the most verdant spots in the city. We returned home with Ms Fatehlal whom we had invited to dine with us. He expressed himself pleased with our dishes.

Tuesday 25th June 1901

Ms Pannelal[158] our friend's father, sat to us this evening for his portrait which we intend finishing at home, as our departure is approaching. His features are very regular and his complexion is fair. He has a

dignified and noble air. He was the Dewan of the state for nearly thirty years and had during his administration introduced many reforms of improvement.

The monsoon appears to have commenced today.

Wednesday 26th June 1901

We went to the palace this morning with the Maharana's portrait as he wished to see it and suggest certain alterations. We had to wait long before His Highness put in an appearance. He never speaks what he himself thinks of the pictures, but makes his favourites to suggest improvements or alterations. As they are ignorant of Art they spoke all sorts of nonsense. H.H. is at the same time careful in telling us not to meddle with the picture unless we agreed with them.

Thursday 27th June 1901

We paid this evening a visit to Sanjangadh [Sajjamgarh], the palace built by the late Maharana on the top of the highest hill in the outskirts of the city.

We drove in a carriage and four to the foot of the hill where an elephant with howdah awaited us. We rode on it to the top along a winding road. The palace is a beautiful four storied building which commands magnificent view of Udaipur. The evening was cool and pleasant.

Friday 28th June 1901

We received the last sitting from His Highness today. He appears to be more free in expressing his opinions. At night our pupil Mr Shobanath gave us a feast and musical entertainment in honour of his marriage which was celebrated the other day at Bikaner to which place the bride belongs. Messers Pannalal and Fatehlal were among those present. The singing by Nautch girls was kept up till midnight.

Saturday 29th June 1901

This afternoon we received from His Highness as parting gift a pearl necklace and dresses of honour for brother and two sets of dresses of honour for me and nephew. Dr Shepherd called in the evening with two ladies to see our pictures. We took a drive to the public gardens. In the evening the Resident Captain Pinhay also visited the studio.

Sunday 30th June 1901

This morning we took leave of the Maharana in the Old Palace. We presented His Highness with his bust and a landscape of mine. We have been paid Rs 5500 for the five portraits we executed for him. We had a large crowd of visitors to our studio and we spent the evening in leave-taking as we leave Udaipur tomorrow morning.

Monday 1st July 1901

We left Udaipur this morning 6 a.m. Friend Ms Fatehlal accompanied us to the station. Singu Buchh Rajji of Jodhpur also came to see us off. Shobhanath our pupil accompanied us as far as Rutlam [Ratlam]. We arrived at Chitore[159] this evening and are put up at the Hakim or Magistrate's residence, he being absent at Udaipur.

Tuesday 2nd July 1901

We went this morning up the Fort so celebrated in the history of Mewar. With the exception of a few old buildings all the rest had fallen in utter ruin. The triumphal column built by Khumbaji Rana is the best preserved of all the structures. It is beautifully carved from top to bottom. It has nine stories and series of stairs lead one to the top [*sic*]. It was built in AD 1439.

Wednesday 3rd July 1901

The plain on the top of the hill is about three and a half miles in length and in breadth at the broadest part one mile. The building described as the fair Padmini's residence is not worth seeing. Padmini was the daughter of the chief of Poongal near Bikaner. We were shown a subterranean passage in which she was said to have burnt herself. There is not a fortress in the whole of India for the defence of which so much blood has been shed as for the Chitor Fort.

Thursday 4th July 1901

We arrived at Ratlam at about 12 this noon and we were accommodated at a house near the station. We had a drive round the city and then visited the Dewan Khan Bahadur Cursetji Rustomji C.I.E. in the beautiful garden where we had last time put up. Though no rain had fallen here yet, the weather is agreeable.

Friday 5th July 1901

We did not go out today. In the evening a party (deputation) from the Caliti State[160] arrived in order to settle the marriage of the Maharaja with H.H. the Rana's daughter. The party was received royally. The ceremony is called here 'Saga' which means bethrotal. The Maharaja had appointed to see us this evening but the visit did not take place owing to the arrival of the new guests.

Saturday 6th July 1901

At this morning at 10 we paid a visit to H.H. the Raja Saheb who is a young man of about 23. He is very civil and modest. We drove from the palace direct to the station, we had as our fellow passenger Dr Rambhau Takomkar of Baroda of the Baroda service. He was returning from Naini Tal[161] where H.H.

The Gaikwar was spending the hot weather. There was no rain on the way though it was cloudy all along.

Sunday 7th July 1901

This morning when we awoke near Bombay it was raining heavily and the country around was flooded. We alighted at Grant Road and drove to Ms Bhaiseth's house at Bhulleshwar in a heavy downpour. We are Ms Bhaiseth's guests. Owning to the rain we decided not [to] go out. Dr Mathai met us at the station and again called in the afternoon and we had a long talk about the calamities in Travancore.

Monday 8th July 1901

Nil

Tuesday 9th July 1901

No rain today. We took a ride on the Tramcar to the market and thence to the Apollo Bunder. Dr Mathai was with us. On our return way we paid a visit to Doctor Balachandra, his brother, Mr Naoroji, Artist, and some others were waiting for us at home. We cannot settle anything until Shriram comes, regarding the length of our stay.

Wednesday 10th July 1901

We drove out with Mr Bapuji with the intention of going to the Fort to make some purchases but were overtaken by rain and so alighted at the Victoria Terminus, and when the rain stopped returned home. We found a beautifully bound volume of Photos entitled 'Our Celebrities' awaiting us having been sent by our friend Ms Soharab Pestonji as a present to Brother.[162]

Thursday 11th July 1901

I and Appay with Dr Mathai went to the Fort at about 3, paid Sehaltes and Clifftons[?] bill, purchased at Tarapurawalla's this year's 'Royal Academy Pictures' No 2304.[163] The first and fifth parts he promised to give afterwards. We next visited Naoroji's studio.[164] Poor man, he gets no orders though he had learnt painting in Europe. I pity him from the bottom of my heart. He says it is hard to get on here.

Friday 12th July 1901

Schleicher came at about 1 and said he had secured his passage and would leave for Germany on Sunday. About the purchase of the Press, he said he was unable to pay the money in lump, seems as the market was tight. He said that he still hoped to make some arrangement in consultation with Shriram who is expected here tomorrow.

Saturday 13th July 1901

Mr Gerhardt and Shriram came from Karli. To the former we showed my sketches of Udaipur, some of which he liked much. Shriram said that they intend to pay us monthly Rs 1000 until the whole Rs 25,000 are paid up, until then the press to remain—as now—in our possession. In case we agree to this they are willing to carry out the agreement.

Sunday 14th July 1901

Being New Moon there was a large crowd of bathers at the Bay and I took early a stroll to Chaupathy to see the scene. Schleicher left today for Germany. I went to Ms Vishnu Pant this morning and asked him if we might agree to the terms proposed by Shriram. He said there was no harm, as long as the property remained in our possession.

Monday 15th July 1901

Having heard Mr Bhapuji's wife was unwell we paid her a visit. We next drove to Chaupathi for a walk. What a delightful promenade with long rows of carriages lining the footpath. On return home we were introduced to a celebrated astrologer from Benaras who had long been anxious to see brother. I have no faith in these men who profess to posses the knowledge of the occult sciences.

Tuesday 16th July 1901

This morning Shriram and I called on Mr Vishnu Pant who was of the opinion that (it was his opinion that) our terms must be reduced to writing to avoid future misunderstanding. Accordingly we called on Mr Dixit the solicitor and explained matters to him. He has promised to prepare the draft for us to sign on Saturday. Shriram who is leaving for Karli will return on Saturday for signing the contract.

Wednesday 17th July 1901

We went this morning with Bapuji to the Fort to see a wealthy Bania,[165] a mill owner, who wants his whole length portrait to be painted. He is an old man and readily agreed to our terms. We shall begin the work soon. His son is an intelligent young man and is an amateur photographer. We mean first to take a photo of the old gentleman in the position in which we intend to paint him.

Thursday 18th July 1901

In the afternoon I and Appay went to Messers King, King & Co. and obtained a cheque for Rs 5000 on Messers Arbuthnot & Co. to be remitted to my cousin Kochu Koil Thampuran. A Surat Bania was to have sat for us [*sic*] for his bust this evening but somehow he did not turn up. The whole day

was very rainy. Received an order from the Raja of Kurupam, Vizagapattam for a portrait of himself and the Rani.

Friday 19th July 1901

Not having seen the new tram terminus at Mazagaon I had a ride at about 12 and I posted the registered letter containing the cheque for Rs 5000 addressed to my eldest cousin the Kochu Koil Thampuran at about 7 in the evening. A.K. Joshi brought Rs 1000 in sovereigns 66 in number and a ten rupee note and he has been asked to pack them and forward to my cousin as a registered parcel.

Saturday 20th July 1901

Shriram Pant and I signed an agreement today at 3 p.m. before Mr H.S. Dixit, Solicitor, by which I have agreed to sell our press to him on his paying us in monthly instalments Rs 25,000 in addition to paying of all debts contracted for the press. Considering the difficulties of properly managing the firm and losses that the plague is inflicting year by year, there is no other alternative left. We are now at last free from anxieties.

Sunday 21st July 1901

Mr Vishnu Pant being of opinion that one or two alterations were necessary in the agreement to make it more binding on Shriram the latter and I went to Bandra to consult Mr Dixit who said that the alterations were not required and the covenant was sufficiently binding. We went to Bandra at 1 and returned at 4. At night there was singing at our place by a boy who sings and acts like a professional dancing girl.

Monday 22nd July 1901

Wrote to Mr Chinubhai acknowledging receipt of the cheque for Rs 750 he sent. In the afternoon called on Mr Assari Virji's to take the measurement of his face but he being absent I went to Colaba and from there walked over the [+++] bridge to the band stand near which soldiers were playing foot-ball. I returned home at 7.30.

Tuesday 23rd July 1901

In the morning we went to Assari Virji's and commenced his life size portrait. From a poor working man he has grown to a millionaire. He came with his father from Cutch with a few copper coins in his pockets. He is not like most men ashamed of owning his poor origin and the hardships he had to encounter in his early life.

Wednesday 24th July 1901

Repeated our visit to Ms Assari Virji. The more we became acquainted with him the more we like him. In the evening Bapuji and we drove to Apollo Bunder though the day was wet and disagreeable. Ms Bhagwan Das whose wife's portrait we were to have begun in the afternoon sent word that it was inconvenient for her to sit today, owing to a friend's death.

Thursday 25th July 1901

The day was again spent at home owing to bad weather. Of course in the morning we had gone to Ms Assari Virji and corrected the drawing and painted the foreground. It is [not?] difficult to pose him with [*sic*] as he is still in every limb[?] when made to sit as we want. He is quite non-interfering and has left everything to us.

Friday 26th July 1901

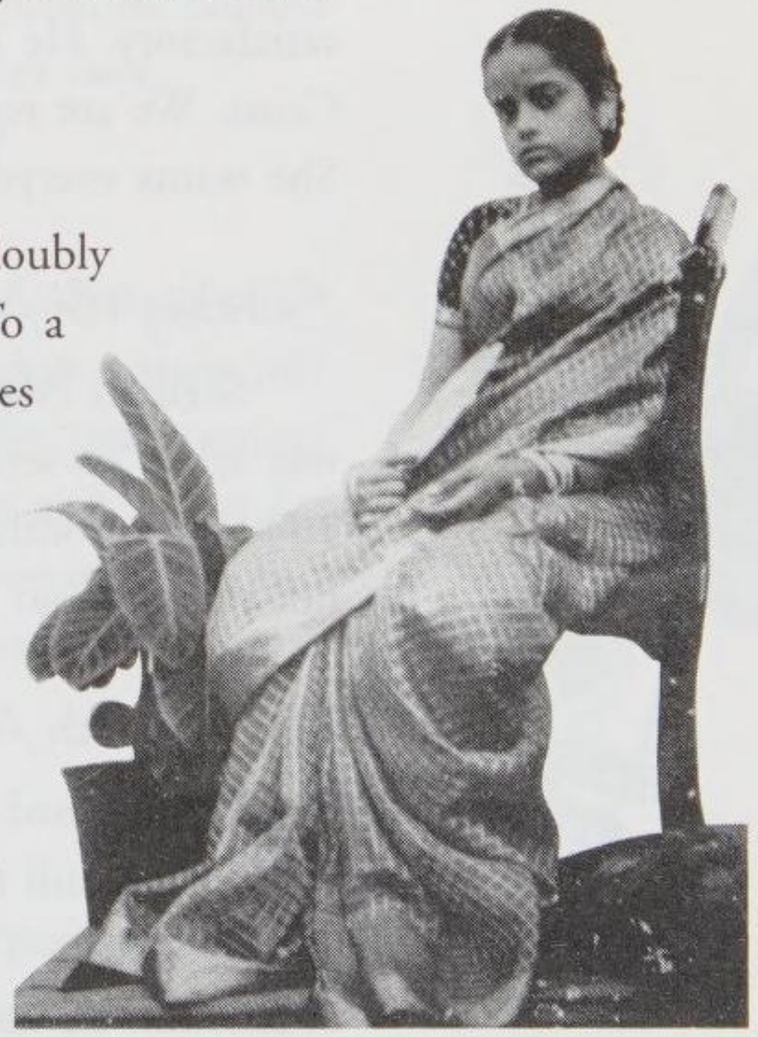
Received a letter from the Raja of Kurupam agreeing to pay Rs 2000 for his portrait with his Rani. In the evening visited first Mr Naoroji's studio, next drove to Kambala Hill and called on the widow of the late Dharamji Bhai Vadhia. At night there was a recital in costume, the Tragedy of Narayin Row Peshwa[166] who was murdered by Sumer Singh. The actor was an old Mahratta Brahmin by name Gopal Narain Date.

Saturday 27th July 1901

In the morning we painted Ms Assari Virji's white coat and in the evening the turban and background of Mr Malchand Shivlal. Took a walk to Chaupathi where we met Mr Purushotam Das, Mungal Das and his wife. The latter looked as beautiful as [+++]. Her daughter, a girl of 20 has lately passed the matriculation and is studying for higher examinations. She is yet unmarried, a rare thing among Hindu ladies of good family.

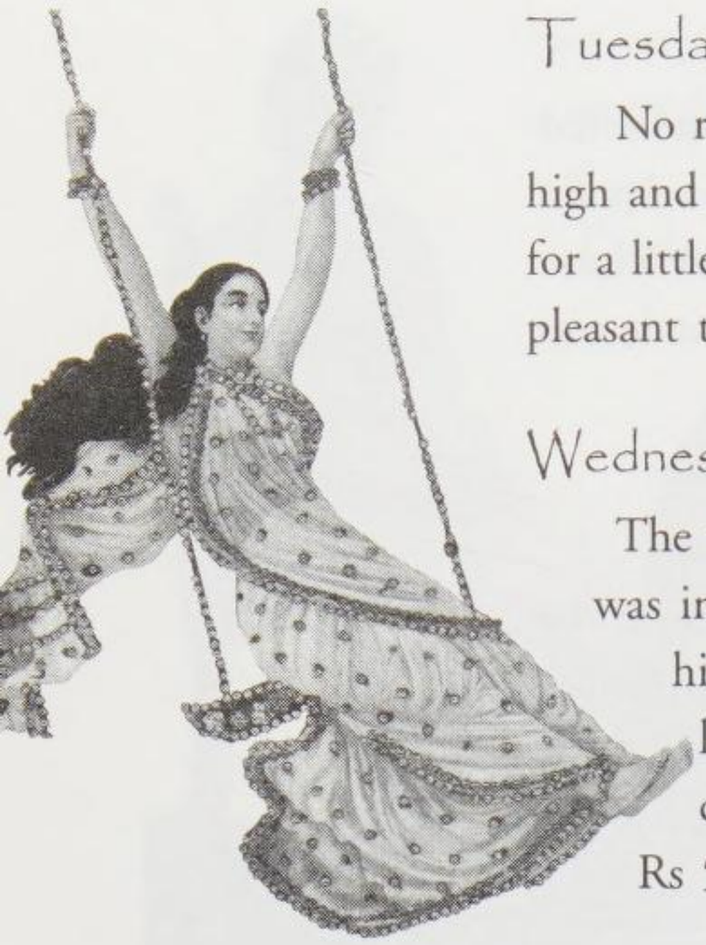
Sunday 28th July 1901

A Sunday in Bombay is generally dull and when it is wet doubly so. There is no newspaper for us to read in the morning. To a regular reader of the Newspaper of the day the paper becomes as indispensable as one's morning coffee or tea. We went to Assari Virji's as usual.



Monday 29th July 1901

A very rainy day. In the morning we did not go out. Messers Kattim Das, Kishan Das and Bhagavan Das came in the evening and we arranged with the latter that we shall paint his wife's portrait on our return to Bombay in December next. The nights are uncomfortable owing to the noise in the street.



Tuesday 30th July 1901

No rain today. We are tired of it. With all the rain the temperature is still high and one perspires like anything. In the evening we walked to Chowpathi for a little fresh air. How delightful the place is. The sea breeze was so cool and pleasant that it was with regret we left the place for home.

Wednesday 31st July 1901

The whole of the afternoon we spent at home owing to the wet weather. It was impossible to go out. Naoroji the artist came in the evening. We gave him an order from a Bania for his deceased uncle's portrait though he latter [*sic*] wanted the work [to] be done by us. Naoroji is in strained circumstances and we gave him the work to assist him. He will get Rs 500 if he does the work well.

Thursday 1st August 1901

This afternoon we went to make sundry purchases for taking home. We had a long wandering about the bazars. The markets are all great liars and try to take advantage of the ignorance of the strangers. It was five when we returned home. At night after supper I sang a few Southern Indian songs as Bhaiseth wanted to hear my singing. He sang some Hindustani songs.

Friday 2nd August 1901

The weather continues very wet and dull. The paint does not dry on the canvas and therefore pictures take a long time to finish. The light too is unsteady. The best season in Bombay is no doubt the cool weather if there is no plague.

Saturday 3rd August 1901

Mr Assari Virji's portrait is approaching completion and so far it is very satisfactory. He is leaving us, he said on the 10th for Jaganath on the East Coast. We are repainting Mrs Jagmohan Das' portrait painted some years ago. She wants everything to be altered.

Sunday 4th August 1901

Shriram Pant who arrived from Karli last evening called here at noon. He was asked to settle some of our accounts with A.K. Joshi and to pay us Rs 1000 this month's instalment before our departure. Very rainy day and could not therefore go out.

Monday 5th August 1901

We finished this morning Ms Assari Virji's portrait. The painting of the left hand is still unsatisfactory. It looks painty. I think it necessary to go again and retouch it. The evening we spent at home. Bapuji having joined us in the afternoon. We are trying to finish the works at home.

Tuesday 6th August 1901

In the afternoon I went out to make certain sundry purchases. At night we went to the 'Gaity' to see performance of 'Romeo and Juliet' in Hindustani. Having seen the same play in the original by an English Company, it was difficult to like the play. Though for a native troupe, it was indeed creditable.

Wednesday 7th August 1901

The day was spent at home as it was showering. In the evening a man from Indore who knew to whistle Ragas and Raginis[167] showed his skill in a masterly way. We have had to repair Mrs Bhaiseth's portrait executed ten years ago. It is difficult to deal with women, they are never satisfied with their dress and ornaments. She insisted on having a 'Sari' which was most difficult to paint effectively. They think that the greater the labour they give the artist the better the picture becomes.

Thursday 8th August 1901

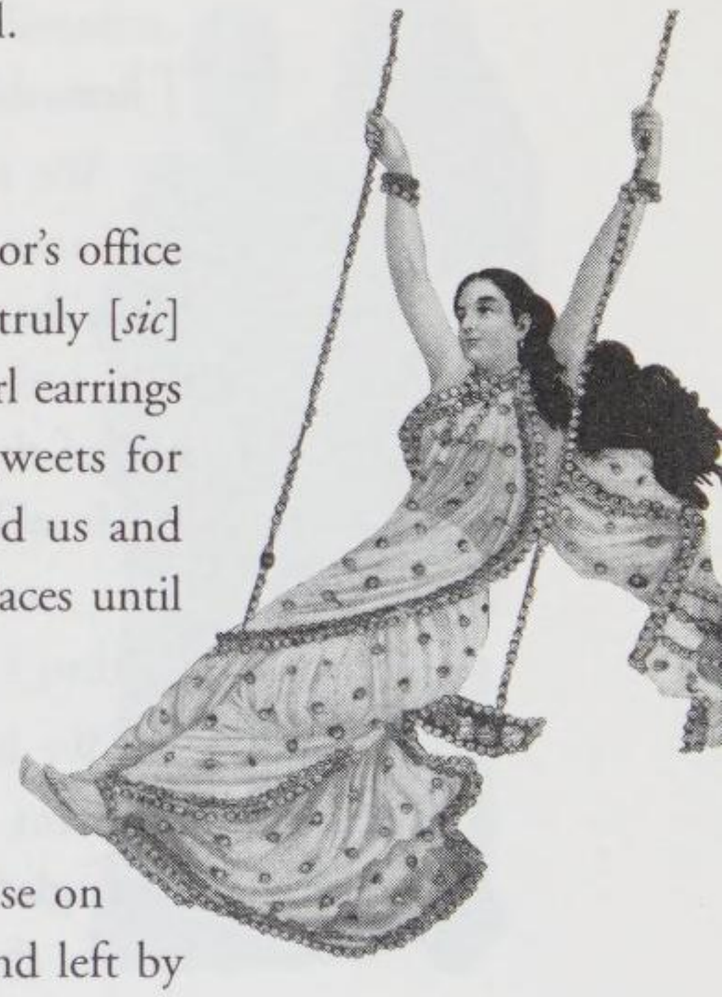
This morning I called on Ms Assari Virji but was told by his son Mr Khomji Assari Virji that the former was away at Nasik. He however paid us Rs 1000 the price of his father's portrait. In the afternoon I called on Mr Dixit to speak to him about the power of attorney given to Mr Schlicker [Schleicher]. He told me to ask Mr Shriram to see him and he would do what was necessary.

Friday 9th August 1901

We visited this morning Mr Chaturbhaj Khomji at Mahalaxmi and next Tribhuvan Das Virjivandas. In the evening we visited Sir Balachandra and bid him farewell. We left Bombay by the Mail at 9.30. Messers Jugmohan Das, Bapuji and some other friends were present at the station to see us off. The morning was very rainy but towards evening the rain ceased a little. At Lonavli Shriram Pant and some others met us at the station. Night very cool.

Saturday 10th August 1901

Early this morning we met Ms Shankar Rao, Shirasthadar, Collector's office at Sholapur. He had brought his wife Kasi in whom we had taken a truly [*sic*] interest from her babyhood. She was presented with two 'bugredies' pearl earrings worth Rs 300 as a marriage gift from us. They gave us coffee and sweets for refreshment. At Shahabad Mr Narain Rao—Bapuji's brother—visited us and gave us coffee and fruits. The sky was cloudy and showery in some places until we reached Raichur. From there it was all dry and warm.



Sunday 11th August 1901

At Arconam there was a great change in the weather. The sun rose on a cloudless sky and there was no trace of rain. We breakfasted early and left by

the passenger train at 9.15 a.m. At Jolarpet a young Bengali got into the same compartment as myself. He said he was a disciple of Swami Vivekananda and he looked from his calm demeanour and dress to be an ascetic. He was barely twenty and was tall and handsome. He gave me a print of the likeness of his Guru.

Monday 12th August 1901

Arrived at Shoranur at 8.30 a.m. today. Took meal at the Kovila Kamor palace and started for Trichur, we in tongas and luggage and servants in bullock carts. The railway work to Trichur not yet finished. They say that line will be open in January next. At present journey very tedious. Arrived at Trichur in the evening at 6, but no cabin-boat has arrived from Quilon. Compelled therefore to stay at the late Dewan's house. Servants and luggage arrived very late at night and so we got our supper only at 11.

Tuesday 13th August 1901

At about 2 p.m. today we left Trichur in canoes, the cabin-boat not having arrived. But scarcely had we proceeded ten miles before we discerned a white sail in the distance and at once made sure that it was our boat. How glad we were to exchange the dirty and leaky canoe for the spacious house-boat. We did not halt at night, but made straight for Cochin.

Wednesday 14th August 1901

We halted this morning at Cochin, before dinner we had a ride in a push-push[168] to British Cochin and back to the Synagogue of the Jews. In the evening we reached Vaicom where we bathed and visited the temple. The Tahsildar Mr Pappu Pillai came to see us and we had a long conversation about the events that had lately taken place in Trivandrum. We left after supper.

Thursday 15th August 1901

We reached Ambalapuzha this morning. The Tahsildar (acting) Mr Sankaranarayana Iyer came to see us. We left after a late breakfast for Mavelikara—but as the whole country was under water the boats grounded frequently on the embankments of the fields and the rowers were not quite sure of the way within. We had to sleep without any supper, the boat arriving at Mavelikara a little after midnight.

Friday 16th August 1901

We landed early this morning and went straight to Ulsavamodam when we learnt that Brother's youngest daughter and her husband were alone there. I was glad to meet my elder brother Ittikomer[169] who had written to me that he was shortly going to Kilimanur. The day was wet and raining.

Saturday 17th August 1901

We left today at about 2 p.m. for Quilon. In the evening we could reach only Ponmana, a lonely place on the sea shore. We walked to the beach where we found a huge fish which had been washed ashore by the waves. We called two fishermen who cut it open and carried it away.

Sunday 18th August 1901

Arrived in the morning at Chankisathuvadarur[?] our estate in Cheriayunkit[?]. Nephew Rama Varma has started a fibre mill worked by steam power. It remains to be seen how far it will succeed. We sent back the cabin boat from here and left in the night for Trivandrum in canoes. It was Ganesh Chathurthi and it was difficult to sit in the boat and not see the moon.[170]

Monday 19th August 1901

Arrived at Trivandrum very early this morning. The death of the Elaya Raja the First Prince and the Senior Rani so soon after each other have made the town very gloomy. We visited the two young Princesses, the present Ranis and their mothers. The Maharaja returned from Courtallam[171] this evening after a fortnight's absence.

Tuesday 20th August 1901

At 11 a.m. today we paid our respects to H.H. The Maharaja. Ms Thanu Pillay—the chief secretary—was in when we went there, as there were other visitors waiting such as Messers Padmanabha Rao, Periaraya Sheristhadar, M. Raja Raja Varma—Inspector of schools—and our visits were necessarily short.

Saturday 24th August 1901

Took leave of the Maharaja in the morning and in the evening visited the Princesses and the Valiya Koil Thampuran.[172] Left Trivandrum for Kilimanur, in the evening at 9. Brother's eldest daughter, the Senior Rani's mother and her husband left for Mavelikara this evening.

Sunday 25th August 1901

[+++] Home again! [+++]

After coffee at Attingal we started and arrived here [Kilimanur] at about 10 a.m. Cousin K.R.R. who is having his mother's Diksha has a thick and bushy beard.[173] He is glad that he will be a free man after two months. I am glad to find all at home in good health.

Monday 26th August 1901

Yesterday I wrote replies to the Raja of Kurupan, Anant Varman Bharve of Nasik and Chinubhai Madavalal, Ahmedabad; Today to P.M. Varkey,

Alleppy; Fatehlal Mehta Udaipur, P. Subbia, Madras, enclosing postage stamps for 14 as due to him, R. Chatterjee—Principal, Kayastha College, Allahabad.

[The Diary page 258 bears a single line saying:]
C. Raja Raja Varma was born on 3-4-1860.

We left Kilimanur on the morning of the 27th December 1901 and arrived at Trivandrum in the evening. Started the next day afternoon and arrived at Neyyartinkara for supper. 29th morning arrived at Nagercoil and visited our estate at Avandakulam. Left Nagercoil on the 30th and reached Tirnevelly 31st morning and took train at one for Madras. The first class compartments were full. Arrived at Mayapuram at night and broke journey there.

1902

Wednesday 1st January 1902

We spent the day at Mayavaram with our nephew Ravi Varma, the deputy collector. Left for Madras by Mail at night. We got a whole first class [compartment] to ourselves.

Thursday 2nd January 1902

Alighted at Madras this morning and put up with Mr Balia Naidu. Left for Bezwada[174] in the evening; were introduced to Mrs Annie Besant and Colonel Olcodt [Olcott][175] at the Rayaporam Station.

Friday 3rd January 1902

Reached Bezwada early in the morning. The canals and the Krishna anicut[176] worth seeing. Bath in the river very refreshing. Town small and dusty. Accommodation for us was provided by R.B. Pal Ethir Rajata[?] Pillai at the palace of the Raja of Nuzwid.

Saturday 4th January 1902

Left Bezwada after early coffee. Mr T. Krishnaswami Naidu, who had kindly attended to our wants came to see us off. He is the District Munsiff. Passed the Godavary and Rajamandri at noon. The palmyra tree is abundant. Reached Waltair 5 p.m; were received by Raja of Kurupam.

Sunday 5th January 1902

Our bungalow is near the Raja's whose guests we are. He saw his wife's portrait and liked it. In the evening drove round the town of Vizagapatam[177] nearly 4 miles from our residence.

Monday 6th January 1902

The Raja takes a lively interest in our work. He wants his own face to be improved and we can easily do it from life. The house we live in overlooks the sea and there is a cold wind blowing from it constantly.

Tuesday 7th January 1902

This evening we visited two shops one of a Parsee and the other of a native. The latter was full stocked with things and we are not a little pleased to see there all of our oleographs exposed for sale. They are popular.

Wednesday 8th January 1902

We improved the Raja's face and put on some more jewels on the Rani. The Raja takes very keenly to heart her death. She was the second daughter of Maharaja Gajapathy Rao a big candid proprietor of his district.

Thursday 9th January 1902

We drove through Vizag and walked up a hill on the top of which is a Roman Catholic Church. The scenery from the hill was extremely charming. The town lay at our feet with the sea beyond.

Friday 10th January 1902

This evening we had a pleasant drive with the Raja in his four in hand. He seems to be a good driver and managed the horses capitally. In the afternoon we paid the Raja a formal visit in his palace.

Saturday 11th January 1902

From a general observation of this part of the country and its people it might be said they are behind Southern India in civilization. In the fine arts and industry too, they are behind the people of Southern India.

Sunday 12th January 1902

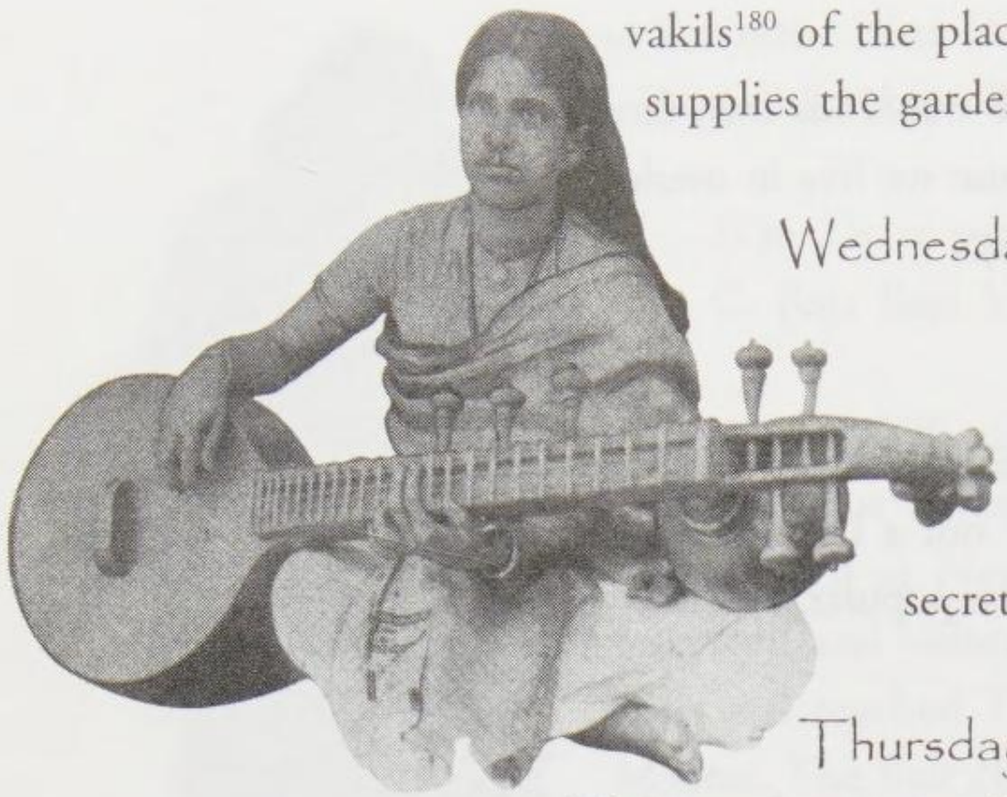
We had a Telugu cook[178] to prepare our supper. The dishes were unlike those of the Tamil Countries and yet they were good.

Monday 13th January 1902

This evening we paid a visit to the Lunatic Asylum. It contains about 70 inmates of whom about 17 are females. Four of the more violent characters were confined in cells barred with iron railings.

Tuesday 14th January 1902

This evening we drove to a garden at the fort of a hill belonging to a gentleman of Bimlipatam.[179] There we met several of the leading



vakils[180] of the place. There is a perennial spring from the hill which supplies the garden with water.

Wednesday 15th January 1902

Today after work we drove to the Railway station which is nearly 4 miles from our place. On our return the horses refused to ascend the hill and we had to walk up. Ms G. Narayanamurthi Raju's secretary accompanied us.

Thursday 16th January 1902

This morning quiet. Frame for the Raja's portrait arrived from Bombay. It was joined and the picture was put in it in the evening. It has added much to the beauty of the painting and the Raja admired it much.

Friday 17th January 1902

Being the anniversary of mother's death we left early for Simhachalam nearly 10 miles from our residence. There is an old temple of Narasimha on the top of the hill (800 ft) to which flight of granite steps lead [*sic*]. There are springs of fresh water. Performed Shradha. Returned at 4 p.m.

Saturday 18th January 1902

Left early for Rajamundry by mail train. Bade adieu to our friend the Raja last night. Met again in the train zamindar[181] of Kissimikota—a minor—going to Madras. Halted at Rajamundri at 11. Mr Krishna Rao his brother being absent, went round the town; bathed in the Godavary and left.

Sunday 19th January 1902

Arrived at Bezwada morning and were the guests of Ethirajulu Pillai. In the evening visited the Museum, where there is good portrait of Queen Victoria and the Krishna Anicut etc. along with Mr Pillai and his son.

Monday 20th January 1902

Ms Gajapathy Rao, our host's son, is an admirer of our pictures and has been writing to 'The Hindu' articles about them. We left at 10.30 a.m. for Secunderabad. In our compartment was a Roman Catholic priest going to Singarani and we had long conversation on religions [*sic*].

Tuesday 21st January 1902

Arrived early this morning at Secunderabad and are the guest of the Raja Dean Dayal and Sons,[182] photographers. Our bungalow is comfortable and

has a nice garden. In the evening drove round the Cantonment and visited Mr M.R. Dastur, Assistant.

Wednesday 22nd January 1902

At noon we started with Dharma Chandra for Hyderabad; visited on the way Bashir Bagh the residence of the late minister, a splendid mansion. Next drove to the Char Minar and to the present minister's quarters which are old fashioned.

Thursday 23rd January 1902

We commenced a fancy picture to be shown to the Nizam as a specimen of our work. In the evening visited Ms Dastur and then drove to Malaly a palace where once a year the Nizam starts in a grand procession, a scene Deen Dayal is getting painted.

Friday 24th January 1902

In the morning I retouched a big painting of the Nizam's procession done by Calastry Raja for Deen Dayal. The distance was too dark and without a real perspective; and I made it retreat by a coat of delicate tint.

Saturday 25th January 1902

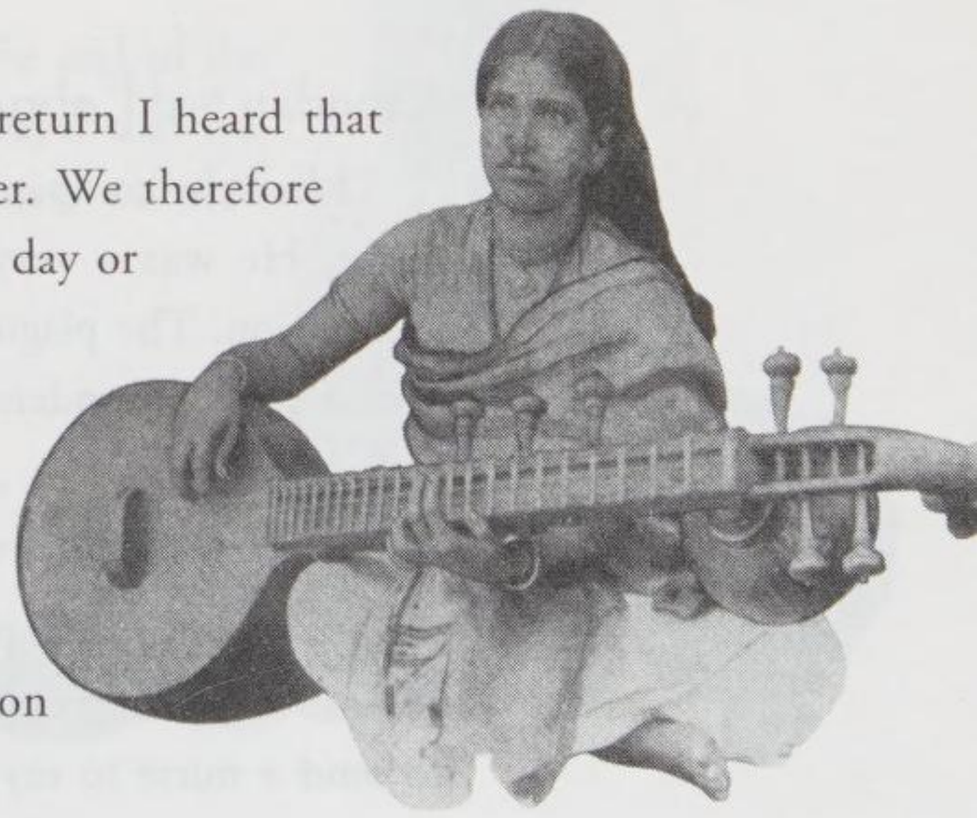
This morning at 8.30 we paid a visit to Maharaja Kishen Pershad, the prime-minister, a very good man having very great love for landscape painting, we were introduced to him by Ms Floridinji Jamsetji, his private secretary. At the gate we were pestered by the servants present.

Sunday 26th January 1902

Commenced this morning a sketch of the Hussain Sagar Tank. In the afternoon visited Falukrara[?] palace built and furnished after European style. We were disappointed with the pictures we found there.

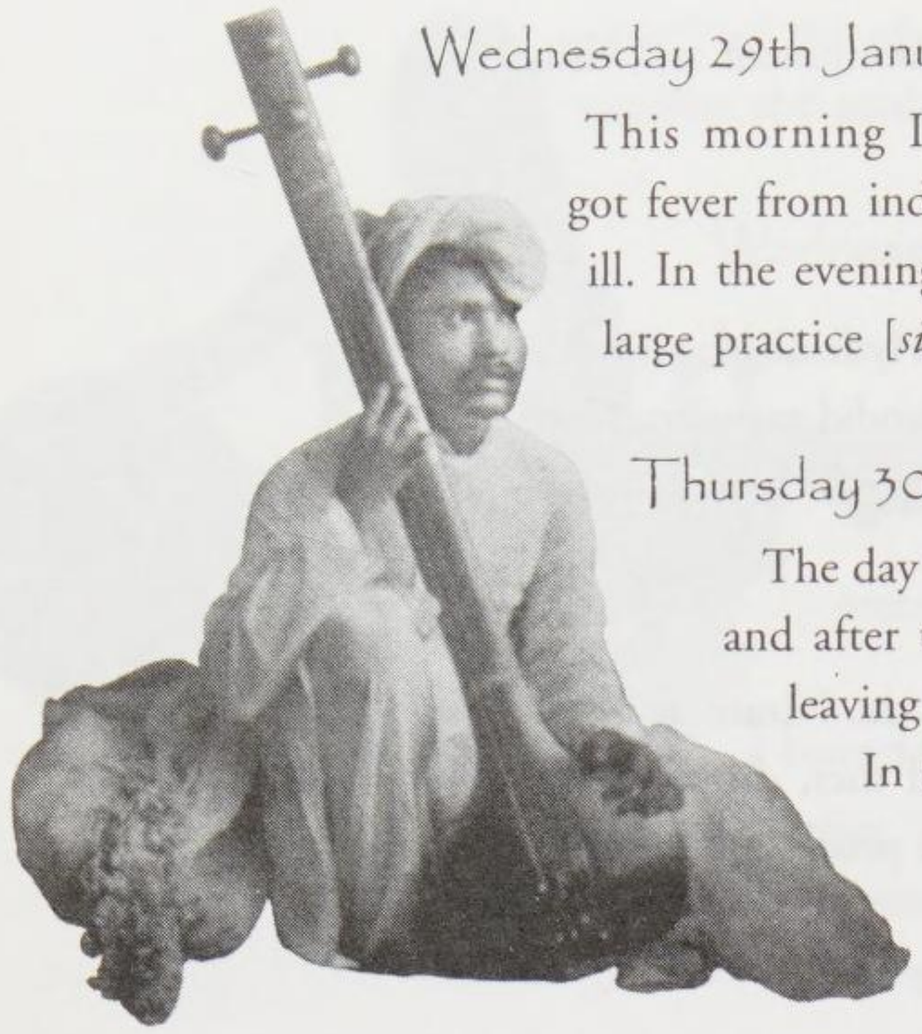
Monday 27th January 1902

I went out again this morning to sketch. On my return I heard that Ms Ethirajulu Pillai and his son had called on Brother. We therefore returned his visit in the morning. He is going away in a day or two back to Bezwada.



Tuesday 28th January 1902

My sketch not finished. I hope to complete it in another sitting. Calastry accompanies me to see work and learn something. We spent the whole day afternoon and evening at home working.



Wednesday 29th January 1902

This morning I finished my sketch of Hussain Sagar. Brother got fever from indigestion towards afternoon. He felt very restless and ill. In the evening we called in Dr K.P. Popat a Parsee doctor having large practice [*sic*].

Thursday 30th January 1902

The day was spent at home working. Brother had free motions and after that he felt better. He is weak no doubt. I think of leaving tomorrow morning for Bombay to see the art show. In the evening I visited Raja Deen Dayal at his house.

Friday 31st January 1902

I left by 6 a.m. train for Bombay. I had as my fellow passenger Mr Cawasji Cursetji Jhanawalla, the son of the Dewan of Ratlam. He is a customs officer in Namsari in the Gaikwar's Service. The journey was uneventful. Through the day was warm the night became cold.

Saturday 1st February 1902

Reached Byculla this morning and was met by nephew Rama Varma and Dr Mathai. In the same train arrived K.V. Krishnan Thampan the brother of the Raja of Kollengode. Visited the exhibition in the J.J. School of Arts. The prize pictures were a disappointment and the number of good works was small.

Sunday 2nd February 1902

Made purchases and visited A.K. Joshi's shop and Ms Jagmohandas. The former paid Rupees 1,000 being the December instalment of the [+++] money of the press. Left Bombay by Mail [at] night.

Monday 3rd February 1902

I had the company of Mirza Hiazah Khan a high official of the Hyderabad State. He was a very kind and courteous man and proved an agreeable companion. The plague authorities did not give me any trouble. I had only to take a pass. Secunderabad again.

Tuesday 4th February 1902

As I had a [no] plague pass I had to walk all the way to the Hospital to submit myself for examination; I could get no carriage. The doctor promised to send a nurse to my place on payment of Rs 2 from tomorrow.

Wednesday 5th February 1902

The nurse called this evening; pocketed her fee and went away promising to look in again after three days. It is fortunate that plague has not yet come here or in Hyderabad.

Thursday 6th February 1902

We stayed the whole day at home. Calastry and his son came in the evening and sat talking long. Deen Dayal and his second son Ganan[?] Chand seem to be jealous of us. They fear they won't get any more orders.

Friday 7th February 1902

This evening we visited the photo studio of Miss Sabina a pleasant looking young Italian Lady, who has opened her studio [at] Chuddar Ghaut. We next visited the Public Gardens which are beautifully laid out and well kept.

Saturday 8th February 1902

We attended in the evening the party given to General Wodehouse at Deen Dayal's place by the Secunderabad public on the eve of the General's transfer to the Punjab. There was a large assembly of Europeans and natives.

Sunday 9th February 1902

We paid a visit to Ms Ramaswamy Iyengar, Barrister-at-law, in order to secure for us a bungalow at Chuddar Ghaut. We saw 2 or 3 houses.

Monday 10th February 1902

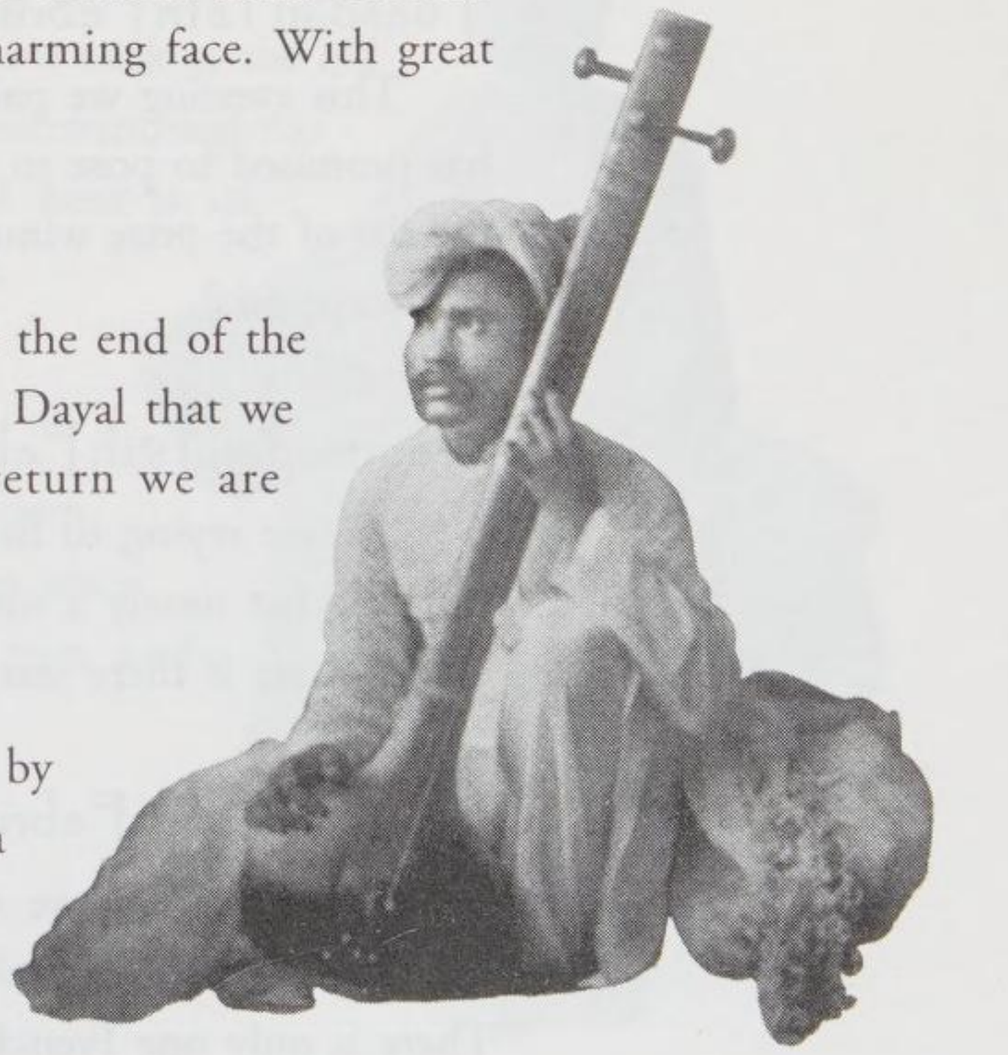
Last evening we visited Calastry [and] his brother. Myself and some friends picked up on the way, a few of the prostitutes to select a model from. The last [best] we saw was a Mahomedan girl with a very charming face. With great difficulty persuaded her to come to our studio.

Tuesday 11th February 1902

We have resolved to move to Chuddar Ghaut at the end of the week. We have been so long the guests of Raja Deen Dayal that we can not any longer accept their hospitality. In return we are improving for them a big picture of...

Wednesday 12th February 1902

...the Nizam's procession painted in black colours by an inferior artist. Deen Dayal called today with a Mahomedan gentleman who is the Nizam's trusted Hakim. He appears to be a very proud and self sufficient man.



Thursday 13th February 1902

The models we were expecting did not turn up and so there was little work. Ms Rangadam Vaidu and two other gentlemen called in the evening.

Friday 14th February 1902

Brother's health is again upset. He has indigestion and diarrhoea—At night I had to go and call Doctor M.C. Reporter who prescribed for him. He said he had been at Cananore for seven years and knows somewhat about the people of Malabar.

Saturday 15th February 1902

With great difficulty we got a girl for a model for the painting of 'At the Bath'[183] we are painting. These prostitutes readily come if called for immoral purposes, but when required for posing they raise great objections.

Sunday 16th February 1902

Remained at home the whole day working. Tiagaraju—Calastry's cousin—spent the day with us. He is a pleasant young man.

Monday 17th February 1902

This evening at about 5 we removed from Ranibagh at Secunderabad to Raja Bhagvandi's bungalow next to the Bank of Bengal at Chadder Ghaut. The building is new and spacious. Brother lost one gold [+++].

Tuesday 18th February 1902

This evening we paid a visit to Miss Sabina the lady photographer who has promised to pose to us as an Egyptian Lady.[184] I read in the Madras Mail the list of the prize winners in the Arts Exhibition. I got silver medal for best landscape [*sic*].

Wednesday 19th February 1902

We are trying to finish the picture 'At the Bath' at which we have been working for nearly a month. In the evening I walked to the 'Young Men's Club' to see if there was anything about the pictures in the exhibition.

Thursday 20th February 1902

In the evening we took a walk to the 'Green Hotel', the proprietor of which is a Parsee whose acquaintance we made at the Party at Deen Dayal's. There is only one French traveller there. The hotel is generally empty.

Friday 21st February 1902

A man calling himself Raja Rajisa[?] Harihara Swami called for the second time this evening. He seemed to be as [+++] that we thought he was not a desirable companion. Ramaswami Iyengar, Barrister, told us it was better to keep him off.

Saturday 22nd February 1902

Received a letter from Ms Thurston informing me of the sale purchase of the Madras Art Society of my picture 'Old Rajput Gateway' which gains this year's silver medal for best landscape, and also the sale of my 'Native Shops'. In another letter he thanked my brother on behalf...

Sunday 23rd February 1902

...of the Society for the gift of two paintings he has presented to the Art Gallery, now being formed in Madras.

Monday 24th February 1902

Last evening we had been present at a music party given by Ms Ramaswami Iyengar to Ms Joshi, the retiring Magistrate of the Residency Bazars. Two dancing girls from Mysore sang very well and afterwards danced till about 12. Recovered our pictures from custom office.

Tuesday 25th February 1902

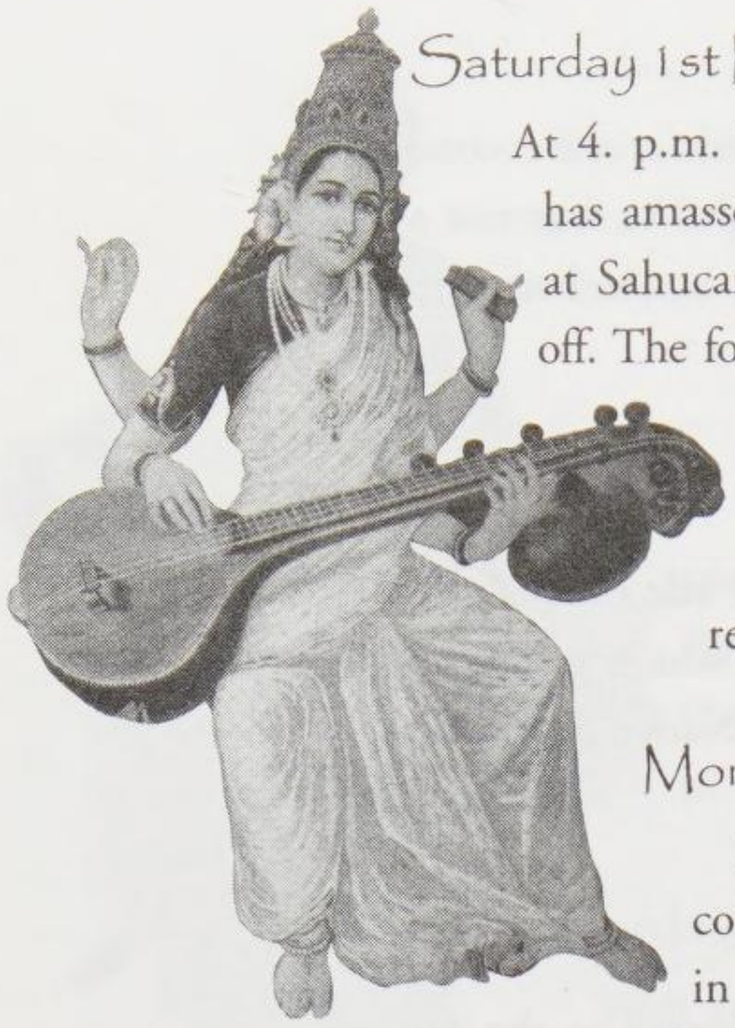
We have not yet succeeded in a sure way of approaching the Nizam. He never leaves his palace and receives very few visitors. He is said to be badly wanting in punctuality. Though young and brought up under new systems, as soon as he was invested with sovereign powers he went back to the old oriental ways of life in the interior of his palace. His surroundings too are not all that could be desired. His Highness I hear is an exceedingly good Prince, kind and liberal to a degree.

Thursday 27th February 1902

His love of Arts and Sports are [*sic*] well known. Unfortunately he has no means of knowing what takes place outside except through those immediate about him and consequently he gets often distorted versions.

Friday 28th February 1902

These menials are notoriously corrupt and levy black mail from all who have anything to do with His Highness.



Saturday 1st March 1902

At 4. p.m. We paid a visit to Raja Bhagavan Das, a Bania Jeweller who has amassed a splendid fortune as the Nizam's jeweller. From his house at Sahucari Caruvam[?] we took a drive round Golconda Fort 3 miles off. The fortress is in ruins now. After supper at his house, returned home.

Sunday 2nd March 1902

In the evening took a drive to the Public Garden and returned home.

Monday 3rd March 1902

In the evening at 5 returned Mr Pestonji's—the customs commissioner's—visit. He is a good old man with a strong belief in Theosophy. He worships Shiva, a strange thing for a Parsee. We drove with him to Hussain Sagar and back home.

Tuesday 4th March 1902

We learnt from Lalu Harilal of Almora who is a frequent visitor to Badrinath of full particulars of the deposition of the Raval Vasudevan Namboodiri and the installation of Raman Namboodiri his assistant. Both were sent to Badrinath by us.

Wednesday 5th March 1902

In the morning we purchased nearly 3 tolar of musk (Kasthuri[185])from a man, who is an inhabitant of Almora, to be sent to Kola Nada Pandarathil[?]. Miss Sabina and Ms Ulit came to see paintings, the latter was the Nizam's coachman.

Thursday 6th March 1902

We paid a visit to the Nawab [+++] the premier noble of the state. He sent a carriage and [+++] two of his sowars[186] for us. His palace is a very big and extensive pile of buildings. He is confined with rheumatic complaint. Ms Pestonji, his wife, daughter and son-in-law came this evening to see our pictures.

Friday 7th March 1902

A custom commissioner Mr Pestonji is of some help to us as things that arrive for us from Bombay will not be detained at the customs office unnecessarily long.

Saturday 8th March 1902

The department is a nuisance to the public. The revenue of the state from this source alone is about 55 lakhs a year. They say that every department is rotten to the core, and this is no exception.

Sunday 9th March 1902

We are now working at a life size portrait of the Nizam from a photo taken by Johnston and Hoffmann.

Monday 10th March 1902.

At 11.30 a.m. we paid a visit to Ms Faridunji and were by him introduced to Mr Baron[?] [+++] whom we took to our studio and he expressed [to be] greatly pleased with our pictures and wished for some particulars of our lives for his book on India.

Tuesday 11th March 1902

I went out at 4 p.m. with Ashit[?] Paraman Das Bhagavan Das' second son and paid two or three visits the first was to Mr Syed Hussain Bilgsamer who being away with the Education Commission, his son-in-law received us.

Wednesday 12th March 1902

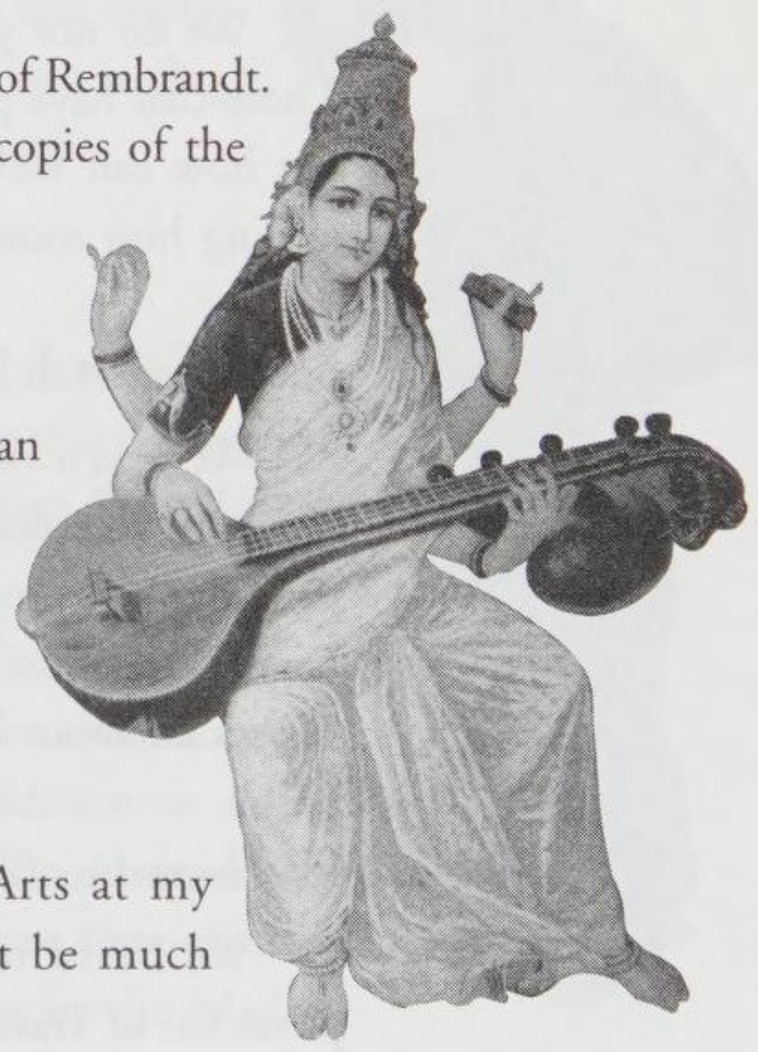
I have been disappointed with Hyderabad and its people. Hypocrisy and un-punctuality and failures to keep promises are the sins of the people high as well as low.

Thursday 13th March 1902

Our opinion of Ms Faridinji, the Dewan's private secretary is that he is a glib talker, but insincere in the extreme. He is ever intent on pleasing Europeans and do[es] not seem to care much for natives.

Friday 14th March 1902

We paid a return visit to Ms Ulit who has got fine old copy of Rembrandt. It cannot be the original as I remember having seen printed copies of the same. It is a very beautiful work. Ulit is a man of taste.

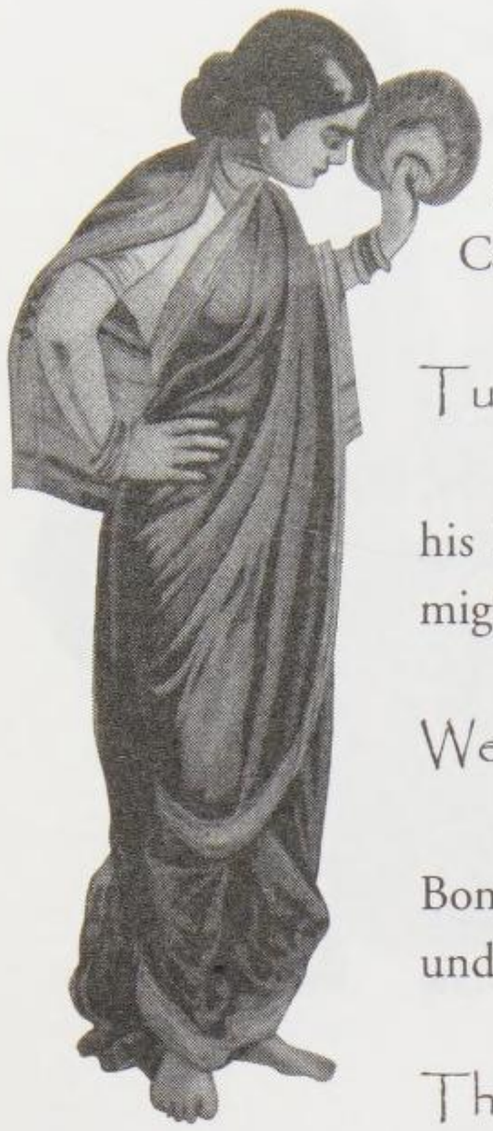


Saturday 15th March 1902

Ms Krishnan Tampan, the younger brother of Vasudevan Raja, the Nampidi of Kollengode, in the Palghat District, has joined us here. His brother who is a friend of ours, is anxious that he should be taught painting.

Sunday 16th March 1902

The boy who was attending the Bombay School of Arts at my advice for nearly a month has left it as he thinks he won't be much profited there.



Monday 17th March 1902

Since coming here we have got other students too. One is Shankar Rao, son of Captain Madhava Rao of the Nizam's Artillery, and the other is Mr Calastry's son. As we teach gratis there are boys always coming to us for tuition.

Tuesday 18th March 1902

Received a letter from Schleicher which showed that he has repented of his letter of the 13th which was very discourteous. I think correspondence might be resumed with him. We have gained a moral victory over him.

Wednesday 19th March 1902

Krishnan Tampan, brother of the Kollongodu Raja came here from Bombay disgusted with his stay there. He is to stay with us and learn painting under us. Raja Bhagavan Das gave another sitting today.

Thursday 20th March 1902

We paid a visit to the Meeralum Tank about 5 or 6 miles from here [Chaddrighaut]. I made a sketch of the lake and hills surrounding it with the sun setting. The drive was hot and dusty.

Friday 21st March 1902

We are glad to hear that our eldest cousin's state of health is not now so serious as it was some time before. He is now undergoing treatment at Kilimanur at the hand of Chiruttaman Moos the younger. He wants us to return home soon, but we are in a dilemma.

Saturday 22nd March and Sunday 23rd March 1902

We do not yet know if we shall succeed in attracting the Nizam's notice. Those that have promised to introduce us to the Nizam advise us to be patient, but how can we stay here patiently when our cousin is so anxious about our joining him soon.

Monday 24th March and Tuesday 25th March 1902

We paid a visit to Nawab Fakiral Mulk the judicial minister, a stout big man of a dark complexion. He belongs to the 1st class nobility here. He admired our paintings and promised to speak to H.H. about them. His son whose name I do not remember is a young man who seems to have received his education in England. He spoke about having [seen] the Royal Academy Exhibition of last year.

Wednesday 26th March and Thursday 27th March 1902

We heard today with deep regret of the death of the greatest native physician of Travancore and Malabar, Narayana Moos of Vyaskara at Kottayam.

He was not only a physician but a sanskrit scholar and a poet. He used to talk little but always to the point. He had completed his 60th year only a few months ago. When he was at Trivandrum brother and I had occasion to dine with him. He was in excellent health.

Friday 28th March 1902

We have heard also of another death. Rishir Nampuri, the father of our cousin, Komathen the oldest resident of Kilimanur died a few days ago in his 80th year. He was an exemplary character, very regular in habits and in full possession of his powers.

Saturday 29th March and Sunday 30th March 1902

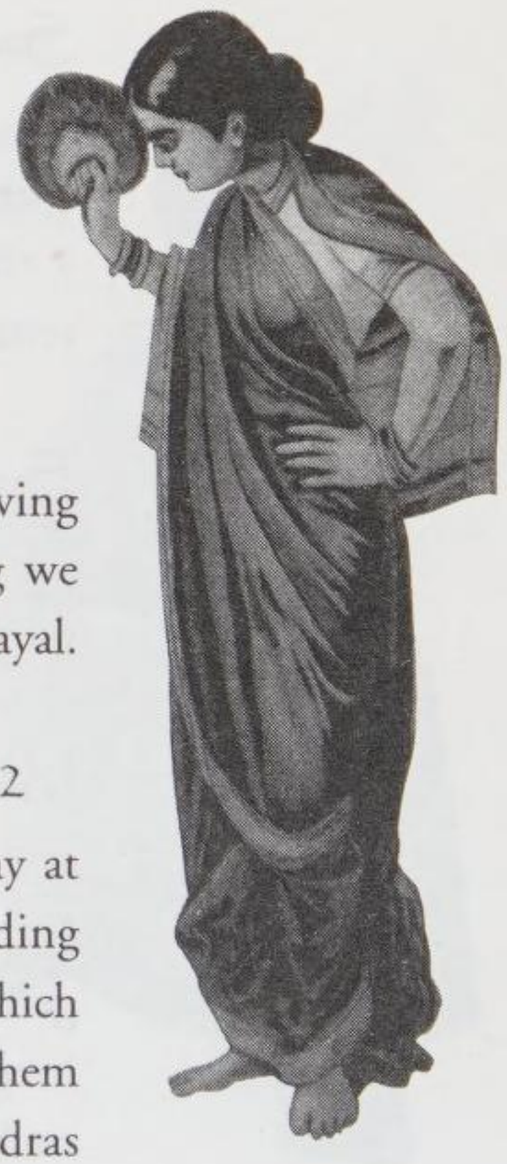
Lord Curzon, the Viceroy arrived here this morning. The Nizam with all his nobility and officers received him and Lady Curzon. We saw the procession from the gate way of our own residence. The scene was a lively one, Lord Curzon, Lady Curzon and Col. Barr, the Resident drove in the first carriage, in the second the Nizam and his son, the heir apparent. They are at the Residency.

Monday 31st March 1902

This morning we sent by Rail the portrait of the Maharaja and Maharani of Mysore to Mr Schleicher at Karli and he has been informed that he should count it as two pictures we have promised.

Tuesday 1st April and Wednesday 2nd April 1902

Last night the Nizam entertained Lord Curzon at dinner at the Chow Mahal Palace. We had also gone there. The streets from the Residency to the palace were splendidly illuminated. The palace itself presented a scene of unrivalled splendour. When the dinner was over there was a fine display of fire-works, after which the party dispersed, big drops of rain from a passing cloud having commenced to fall to the inconvenience of those present.



Thursday 3rd April 1902

Today is my birthday. I complete my forty second year this day having been born in 1860. I cannot realize I am so old as that. In the evening we drove to Secuderabad and visited first Mr M.R. Dastur and then Deen Dayal.

Friday 4th April, Saturday 5th April and Sunday 6th April 1902

Since my last birthday on which we arrived at Udaipur for a short stay at the invitation of H.H. the Maharana I have painted—in addition to aiding my brother as usual—a set of Udaipur Scenery, more than half a dozen, which were exhibited in the Bombay Fine Arts Exhibitions of this year. One of them 'An old Rajput Gateway' gained the 1st prize for Landscape in the Madras

exhibition and was purchased by the Society for its Gallery. Here I have painted a successful view of the Hussain Sagar Lake. I could not unfortunately paint any figure subject, the one I commenced at Kilimanur a few months ago not having been completed.

Tuesday 8th April 1902

Mr R.K. Dastur called here last evening to see our paintings. He was, he said very much pleased with the Nizam's portrait. He has requested us to give his cousin's daughter some lessons in painting.

Wednesday 9th April 1902

The name of the Parsee lady who wants to take lessons from me is Miss B. Edulji Dastur. She is, it appears, proficient in English music and plays on the piano well.

Thursday 10th April 1902

Regarding eldest cousin's state of health, Moos, under whose treatment he is, writes that it is not yet satisfactory and we should not stay here so long but return home, as soon as possible.

Friday 11th April 1902

We got permission to place our pictures at the minister's palace where there is a chance of their attracting the notice of the Nizam and the Viceroy, who are to see the Lungar procession from there.

Saturday 12th April 1902

This morning we went to the minister's to see how we best could arrange them, but the rooms are small and ill lighted. On return home we received a telegram that cousin Kochu Koil Thampuran not being better we should return soon.

Sunday 13th April 1902

Today the young Parsee Lady came to take lessons though we are leaving on this 16th for Kilimanur. Her name is Miss B. Edulji Dastur.

Monday 14th April and Tuesday 15th April 1902

We went early this morning to the minister's palace to see the Lungar [procession]. The Nizam, the Viceroy and a large number of ladies and gentlemen were present. All the troops of His Highness regular as well as irregular cavalry, artillery, elephants, marched past for two hours. It is a sight well worth seeing. It was 12 noon when we returned home.

Wednesday 16th April 1902

We left Hyderabad this morning, as the Resident was also leaving for Gooty, the ministers had come to the station. From Wadi, brother, myself and Krishnan Tampan of Kollengodu had one entire 2nd class compartment to ourselves.

Thursday 17th April 1902

Reached Madras early morning and put up at Rameswami Mudaliar's Choultry. Visited Miss Kharegate and her brother of the Madras P.W.D. We made some purchases in the town after breakfast. Left for Shoranur at 6 p.m.

Friday 18th April 1902

At Olarokode, the Raja of Kollengode and Mr Amantapattar, Tahsildar met us and provided us refreshments. Krishnan Tampan joined his brother. Trichur was reached in the evening. Poonam festival going on.

Saturday 19th April 1902

Karupad [+++] was reached in the morning. Cabin boat had come from Quilon. After breakfast started for Ernaculam. The Railway will not be open from Sheranur to Cochin for another month or two.

Sunday 20th April 1902

Reached Karurmadi in the morning for breakfast and Vallikavoor in the evening for supper.

Monday 21st April 1902

At Karurmadi, yesterday we met K.V. Mathew, B.A, Headmaster, Chittoor, who presented us with a young peacock. This morning we reached Chelukur and [in] the evening we reached home.

Tuesday 22nd April 1902

Our cousin who is suffering from what looks like heart disease is better. He got fits now and then and they are very violent. He is under [medical attention of] Chiruttaman Moos.

[No entries till 23rd April 1902]

Wednesday 23rd April 1902

We have got a cage made for our peacock. He is very anxious for freedom, and does not like to be shut up.

[No entries till 30th May 1902]

Friday 30th May 1902

My brother Goda Varma arrived this morning from Trivandrum where his wife has come for the Thirumasam of the late Senior Rani. Cousin's health worse today.

Saturday 31st May 1902

Today is my nephew Ravi Varma's birthday. Myself and my two brothers intend leaving for the Capital tomorrow after performing Shradha to morrow.

Sunday 1st June and Monday 2nd June 1902

Left Kilimanur for Trivandrum to attend the late Senior Rani's first anniversary of death. All arrangements for travelling and supper at Attingal were made by Sirkar. Tahsildar and Munsiff were present. Cabin boat arrived from Quilon just in time. Reached Trivandrum this morning.

[No entry till 23rd June 1902]

Monday 23rd June 1902

[The entry under this date is obviously a misplaced note from 9th December 1902. Most probably it was entered in haste into a blank space in the original diary, a practice accounted for in an entry from Wednesday 22nd July 1903. The commission and technical details of the portrait work are given in the entries September till December 1902].

Portraits expected in Madras during our stay from September of this year till December[:]

1. Col. Sir George Moore, Life size whole length—for the Municipal Hall[;] Price including gilt frame Rs 1500.
2. Sir Arthur Havelock, the late Governor of Madras. For the Banqueting Hall, Government House. Price including frame Rs 1500.
3. Justice Sir Bhashyame Iyengar—half length for the vakil's association's rooms. Price without frame Rs 500.
4. Justice Sir Subbaramani Iyer, half length for the vakil's association's room. Price without frame Rs 500.
5. Lord Govind Das—Half length. In return for the house accommodation he kindly provided us during our three months stay in Madras.
6. Mrs Baaliah Naidu—small half length—as a mark of friendship for her husband.
7. A bust of the Hon'ble Mr J. Walkinson—presented to him.

Orders received on the 9th December 1902:
Shri Raja Bomadivaru Bhashya Karla Naidu, Bahadur of South Vollur, Cacanada. His father's half length portrait, without gilt frame. [+++]

Complexion—dark; Headdress red with gold lace White angraka. [+++] Besides the above order the same Zamindar of South Vollur has given an order for half length of himself and two busts of the Hon'ble N. Subbarao Pantulu of Rajamundri and advanced Rs 300—The prices settled are[:]

The zamindar's half length	Rs 500
His father's	Rs 500
Two busts of Subbarao's at 200 each	Rs 400
[Together]	Rs 1400

The order for two busts cancelled and reduced to one by N. Subbarao. The total amount therefore due is only Rs 1200 from the Zamindar of South Vollur. [+++]

One half length of the King and Queen 500
Mr Chental[?] Rao—bust 200

Monday 11th August 1902

P. Krishna Rao Esqs. B.A. & B.L. Musin[?] Trichinopoly District.

Tuesday 12th August 1902

Mr Sohabji Esqs.
Cannanore.

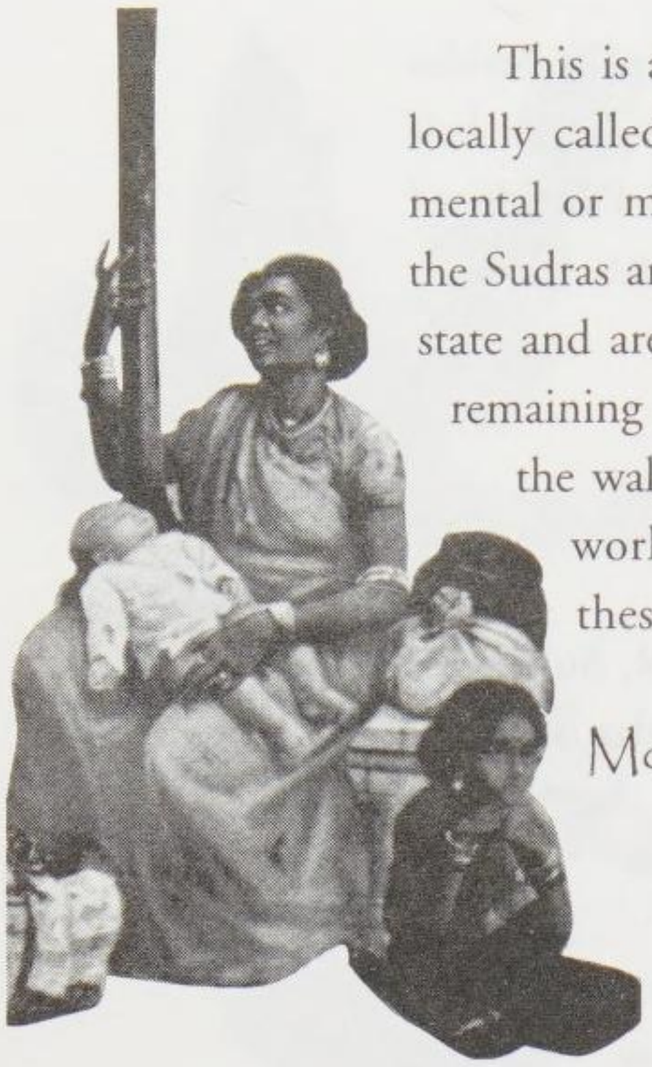
Wednesday 13th August 1902

The Honourable J. Thomson I.C.S.
Second member of Council
Nangurbhagam
Madras.

The remnants of the gilt mounting brought by Ms Sivaswami Iyer for the portraits of justices Bhashyamand Subramani Iyer were utilized by us. The small pieces measured in all 14 ft and the prize [*sic*] per foot is Rs 1–9–a.[187]

Monday 25th August 1902

Lord Curzon when addressing the students of the Rajkumar College[188] at Ajmere on the 19th November, spoke as follows regarding the aristocracy of India: 'In my view it is essential to the welfare of a nation that its aristocracy should not be divorced from its public life. Those countries in which the nobility have detached themselves from the current of the national existence, where they have ceased to be actors and became merely spectators, are either in a state of suspended progress or are like a man with his right arm bandaged and in a sling—he is badly handicapped when he finds himself in a tight place'. [+++]



This is applicable to the aristocracy of Travancore the Rajas or as they are locally called Thampurans and Koil Thampurans. There is neither material, mental or moral progress among them. While the other Malayalees notably the Sudras are taking an active part in the administration and public life of the state and are coming to the front, the aristocracy—it is sad to see—are either remaining stationary or are gradually going down. I am sure they will go to the wall unless strenuous effort is made to educate them and make them work like an ordinary man. Mere lineage does not count much in these days.

Monday 1st September 1902

Having received a commission from Ms J. Singara Mudaliya, Manager, Municipal Corporation. Madras, to paint a life size portrait of Col. Sir George Moore[,] President...

Tuesday 2nd September 1902

...of the municipality who retires in October next. We made preparations for our trip to Madras. The prize [*sic*] of the portrait has been fixed at Rs 1500 including...

Wednesday 3rd September 1902

...framing charges. Besides us two, there are four servants accompanying us, two Brahmins, one Varar and a Sudra. The first two and the last are old servants.[189]

Thursday 4th September 1902

We left Kilimanur early this morning and after breakfast at Attingal left in canoes for Quilon. We halted [at] Chilakur near Warkalay for supper.

Friday 5th September 1902

Reached Quilon about 8 this morning. We are the guests of Ms K.P. Sankara Menon District Judge our old friend. In the evening visited Mr Raja Rama Rao, Peshkar. Krishnan Pandalay, Vakil joined us in the evening and had a pleasant time of it.

Saturday 6th September 1902

Reached Mavelikara at about 10 in the morning. We had engaged from Quilon a big cabin boat. My brother Goda Varma is under treatment and nephew Kerala Varma is vaccinated. Left after supper. Rainy.

Monday 8th September 1902

Ernaculam—arrived early in the morning and put up in the palace as guests of the Prince Rama Varma, 13th Prince. Judge Marar and

K.P. Padmanabha Menon, Vakil, visited us at the desire of the Cochin Princes. I played on the harmonium and we spent a pleasing evening.

Tuesday 9th September 1902

Very heavy rain. Left by the 7.50 a.m. train for Madras. We travelled for the first time by the newly opened Cochin railway. Changed at Shoranur to the Madras Railway. I found the new line very interesting.

Wednesday 10th September 1902

Reached Madras at about 7 this morning and drove to Govind Bhavan, Egmore which is placed at our disposal by Lord Govind Das. We went with the Kollengodu Raja's brother to Saidapet for breakfast and returned to Govinda Bhavan at 6. p.m.

Thursday 11th September 1902

Lord Govinda Das paid us a visit in the morning. I wrote certain letters in the afternoon. The house we have put up is opposite to that of K. Rajagopalacharia on the Poonamali Road—facing the tank. Though small it is a cool place.

Friday 12th September 1902

This afternoon we went to the Municipal office and were introduced to Sir George Moore by Ms T. Singaru Mudaliyar, the Manager. We next paid a visit to Lord Govind Das. Heard of a serious accident on the Madras Railway.

Saturday 13th September 1902

This morning's papers say that the whole of the Madras-Bombay train was wrecked near Cudappa owing to a bridge having been washed away by heavy rains. The number of dead and wounded persons is very large.

Sunday 14th September 1902

Onam the great Malayalam festival took place to day. We had to dine with us the Kollengodu Raja and his brothers.

Monday 15th September 1902

Dr T.M. Nair called this morning. He is dressed like a European. He wanted to know our terms for half length portraits of Justice Subramany Iyer and Bharhyam Iyengar. Ms R.V. Shrinivasa Iyer, acting registrar general called in the evening.

Tuesday 16th September 1902

This morning at 10.30, Sir George Moore gave us the first sitting at Pators Gardens. The portrait is a whole length life size one. In the evening we saw the Raja of Kollengodu off at the Central Station and next visited Mr Rajagopalacharia.

Wednesday 17th September 1902

This morning we paid a return visit to Ms Shrinivas Iyer, at his house in my [+++] [Mylapore] and devoted the rest of the morning to painting. As I am suffering from cold we did not go out in the evening. At night there was heavy rain.

Thursday 18th September 1902

The morning wet and cloudy. Sir George gave us his second sitting. In the afternoon we visited Left. Col. H.D. Love [*sic*] who is writing an account of the pictures in the Government House. Next attended the opening ceremony of sheds for animals erected by Lord Govind Das, Ms Justice Boda presided.

Friday 19th September 1902

Sir George sat for the third time. We painted his coat and waistcoat. The sittings never extended to more than a hour and a half. In the evening we drove through Triplicane, visiting the Parthasarathy Temple and the tank.

Saturday 20th September 1902

Ms G.S. Sivaswami Iyer, Vakil, High Court called on us this morning and entrusted us with an order to paint Justice Bhashyam Iyengar's half length portrait for Rs 500. Sir George sat for his trousers and boots.

Sunday 21st September 1902

In the evening we visited Dr T.M. Nair and Mr C. Sankaran Nair while driving through Egmore.

Monday 22nd September 1902

In the morning sitting from Sir George. In the evening were present at the presentation of a sword to Vasava Menon, Inspector, for his prompt discovery of a burglary committed in Calicut. The Inspector General of Police handed the sword to the man.

Tuesday 23rd September 1902

At 10 a.m. sitting from Sir George the face not quite satisfactory, yet. In the evening called at Albert & Co. to consult Varadappa Naidu about my cold. He is an experienced doctor. He gave me medicines. His fee is moderate.

Wednesday 24th September 1902

This morning we visited justice Sir Bhashyam Iyengar and next Rao Bahadur Ethirajulu Pillai whose guests we were at Bezwada. In the afternoon visited the High Court and sat for some time where Bashyam was hearing an appeal.

Thursday 25th September 1902

This morning the Raja of Kollengodu came back and I went to the station to receive him. In the evening we visited with the Raja the Cosmopolitan Club where we became acquainted with Mr Ramunni Menon who has been excommunicated for going to England by the Raja of Cochin.

Friday 26th September 1902

At 10 a.m. we got Sir Bhashyam photographed in his judge's robes at Del Tufo's studio. Next had one group [photograph] taken of my brother, the Raja of Kollengodu and myself. In the evening we saw the Raja off to Kollengodu.

Saturday 27th September 1902

Worked in the morning on Sir George's portrait. In the evening Subbiah and I went first to Balkrishna Mehta, Jeweller, and arranged for the despatch of 14 diamonds to brother Goda Varma. Next visited a clothe-merchant [*sic*] and then returned home.

Sunday 28th September 1902

This afternoon visited Miss Aloo[?] Khariyat [Kharegate] and her mother; next went to the musical entertainment at Sir Savala Ramaswami Mudaliars, whose birth day it is. A Bangalore dancing girl sang.

Monday 29th September 1902

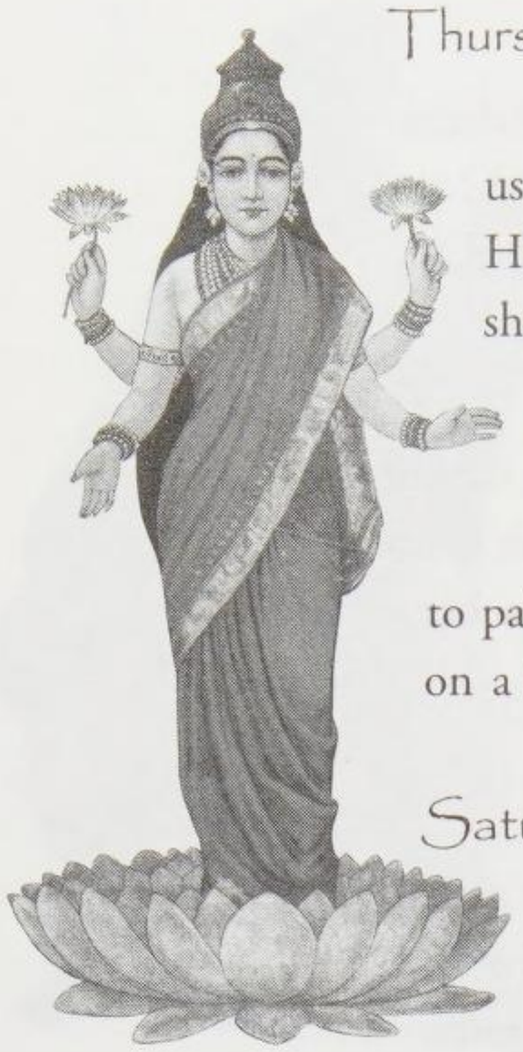
This afternoon we paid a visit to Mr Edgar Thurston, who took us round the museum, the Fine Arts Section engaging our attentions most. There are five paintings of mine two figure subjects and the landscapes, and two of my brother.

Tuesday 30th September 1902

My brother's son Rama Varma and Chiruttaman Vishnu Moos who had been on a short visit to Bombay arrived here this morning. In the evening we drove to the town, China Bazar and Gugili.

Wednesday 1st October 1902

This morning Rama Varma & Moos accompanied Krishnan Tampan of Kollengodu to Saidapet. We went to Del Tufo's to get Sir Bhashyam Iyengar's photographs.



Thursday 2nd October 1902

We paid a visit to Mr A. Sim co-member of the Revenue Board. He gave us a very hearty reception and said he had long heard of Brother's name. His bungalow at Adyar is beautifully situated and he took us round to show the scenery.

Friday 3rd October 1902

Sir V. Bhashyam gave us a sitting this morning. His face is interesting to paint as he has very distinctly marked features. He is represented as sitting on a bench and listening to a pleader in the bar.

Saturday 4th October 1902

A correction: Our visit to Mr Sim was yesterday and not on the 2nd and Sir Bhashyam's first sitting was today and not yesterday...

Sunday 5th October 1902

...as mentioned above. Sir Bhashyam gave another sitting.

Monday 6th October 1902

Sir George gave another sitting, but we could not finish the face which is rather difficult for a painter. In the afternoon wrote an account of our family for Ms S. Ramanatha Iyer who is writing a history of Travancore.

Tuesday 7th October 1902

There was heavy rain last night. Sir Bhashyam whom we were expecting did not come. I worked on Sir George's carpet which though of our own choosing is of an intricate design.

Wednesday 8th October 1902

Brother left for Conjivaram[190] this afternoon to spend the last three days of Dussera (Saraswathi) show. In the morning Sir Bhashyam Iyengar gave a sitting and promised during the next week one [more] sittings.

Thursday 9th October 1902

This morning I finished the carpet. Our Brahmin servant Venku is suffering from fever. Chaltu has gone with Brother and so there is no one to cook our meals. For supper we went to a Homila[?] Hotel where Brahmin students dine.

Friday 10th October 1902

Mr Thurston called at our studio this morning. I received him and showed him Sir George Moor's portrait, he liked it much. I proceeded to Conjivaram

at 2. p.m. A dancing girl and some Mudaliars[191] were in the same carriage. Reached Conjivaram at 7 p.m.

Saturday 11th October 1902

Last night I went to the temple of Kamashi where brother was worshipping. There was an immense crowd of men, women and children. I worshipped this morning at Ekambareswaran Koil and at Kamashis,[192] the former is the larger of the two.

Sunday 12th October 1902

Yesterday afternoon we visited the temple at Vishnu Canji. Returned early this morning to Madras which was reached at 10.30.

Monday 13th October 1902

We visited Wait & [+++] this evening for a photo of Sir A. Havelock, late Governor. Next went to the beach for a walk and met Shri Narayana Marar, Judge of Cochin who has come with his wife to consult some doctor.

Tuesday 14th October 1902

I went to the Chindharipet Bridge to make a sketch of the palace but there was such a large crowd around me as I commenced sketching that I had to stop work. Mr Marar came to Pathers Garden to see us.

Wednesday 15th October 1902

On the road to Mylapore from Triplicane stands a mosque and [+++] on the bank of a small tank. We visited the spot with a view to my sketching it one of these days.

Thursday 16th October 1902

In the evening we called first on Mr Bauliah Naidu but he was out; we next paid a visit to Sir S. Ramaswamy Mudaliar and asked his opinion about the photo of Sir Arthur Havelock, from which we are to paint his likeness in oils.

Friday 17th October 1902

Two sketches of Ahalya were sent to Mr Schleicher by post today. Six pictures have been delivered to him till now including the two sent today.

Saturday 18th October 1902

This morning we went to the High Court to make a sketch of the Bench over which Sir Bhashyam presides in order to paint it in his portrait. In the evening we went as usual to the beach for a walk.

Sunday 19th October 1902

In the afternoon we visited our Parsee friends the Kharegates, who are very nice people. Next we saw Ms Baulia Naidu and the Kollemkodu Raja's father-in-law who has come with his daughter for medical advice.

Monday 20th October 1902

In the morning I paid a visit to Dewan Ramaswami Chettiyar to consult about Sir Arthur Havelock's portrait. I did not [+++] [like the] man. He seems to put on great airs. In the evening we went as usual to the beach for a walk.

Tuesday 21st October 1902

This morning Mr M.R. Karegate the engineer, his mother and sister visited our studio. They are deeply interested in our works, have a refined knowledge of the Fine Arts. Nephew Rama Varma, brother's son left for Trivandrum this evening by mail.

Wednesday 22nd October 1902

I have been doing Sir George Moor's background this morning and a portion of his [+++] coat. In the evening we went to the Bazar in search of gilt mountings, but did not come across any satisfactory specimen.

Thursday 23rd October 1902

This evening Messers Sivaswami Iyer and Govinda Menon, Vakils of the High Court, came again and gave us a commission to paint a portrait of justice Sir Subramany Iyer. The whole of last night and today we have had heavy rains.

Friday 24th October 1902

Day wet and rainy. In the morning Sir George called and was pleased with his portrait which is almost entirely my own work. In the evening we visited Sir Subramany Iyer to speak to him about his likeness we are to do.

Saturday 25th October 1902

Sir George whom we were expecting came rather late and so we postponed the sitting to Monday. In the evening called on Sir Savaluu, but he had not returned home; so after visiting the parents of the Kollengodu Raja's wife, we returned home.

Sunday 26th October 1902

Called on Sir Sawalai Ramaswami Mudaliar this morning and settled all about the late Governor's portrait which we are at once to begin.

Monday 27th October 1902

Sir George again [+++] late and the weather being very gloomy could do no work. Very rainy from morning and so remained at home. Raja Bhagwan Das informed by today's post that we shall part with the Nizam's likeness for Rs 1000 cash.

Tuesday 28th October 1902

I am writing for Ms S. Ramanatha Iyer's History of Travancore under the Maharajas, the chapter on Fine Arts at Travancore. I have already sent a short sketch of our family. The weather being bad we did not go out.

Wednesday 29th October 1902

This morning Sir Arthur Havelock's portrait was commenced. I sketched the face. In the evening we visited some of the shops for a coloured portrait of the King, but instead bought two parts of the famous pictures of the World now being issued.

Thursday 30th October 1902

Received samples of gilt frames from the Bombay Fine Arts Gallery. We preferred the smaller of the two kinds for Rs 175. The frame is for Sir George Moor's portrait. Brother is painting Justice Subramany Iyer from a photo.

Friday 31st October 1902

Diwali Holiday[193]—closed today. [I]n the evening we went to see Lord Govind Das to present our Diwali greetings; but in his absence we saw his old and infirm father and came away. We had our walk on the Marina before returning home.

Saturday 1st November 1902

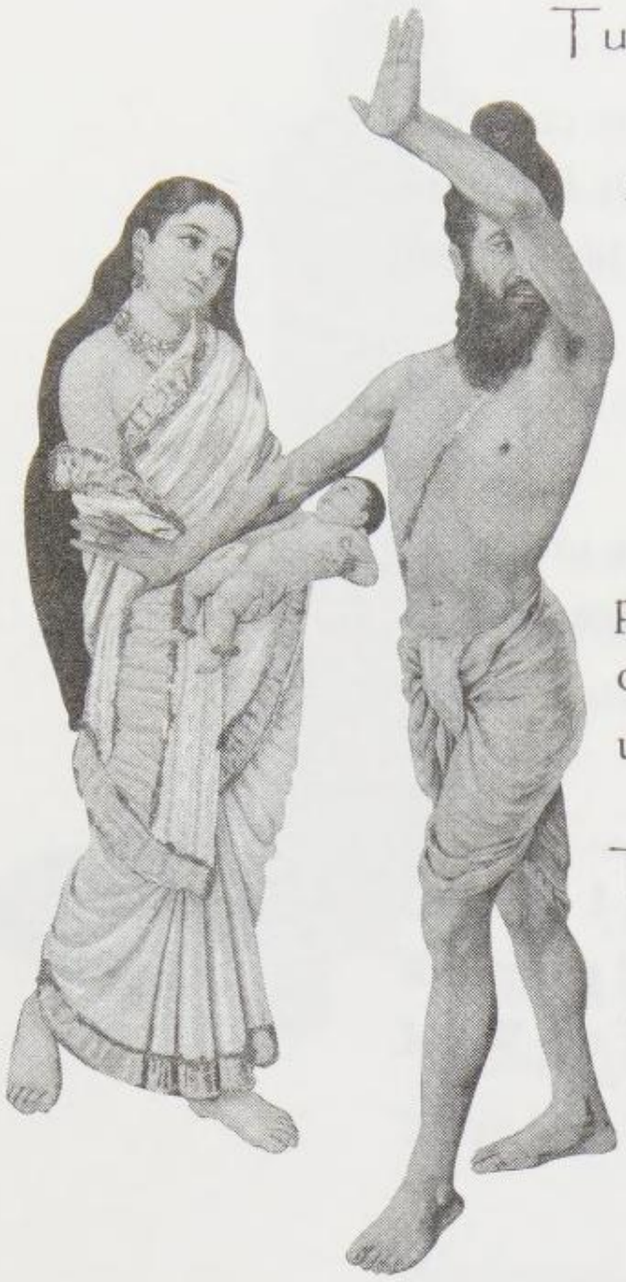
This evening we attended a musical entertainment given by Lord Govind Das in honour of the Diwali Festival. Two men sang to the accompaniment of his harmonium Hindusthani songs. The singing was not very interesting. Returned home at 8.

Sunday 2nd November 1902

This morning I went to the Barner's Bridge Road and made sketches of a mosque with a tank in the front now full to the brim.

Monday 3rd November 1902

I visited the [+++] musjid again this morning and painted the main building which they have disfigured by applying white chunam to the dome. The dome now stands out in disagreeable contrast to the mellow and harmonious tones of the lower part.



Tuesday 4th November 1902

I went again to the musjid. In the evening I went to the beach to make a pencil sketch of it for a painting. The building standing dark against the warm sunset sky dotted [with] purple clouds is extremely beautiful.

Wednesday 5th November 1902

I went to sketch as usual in the morning. In the afternoon I painted the curtain in Sir Havelock's Portrait. We did not go out as our horse is unwell. Some Malayaly young men came and invited us to their club.

Thursday 6th November 1902

This morning I finished the sketch of the Masjid. In the evening we called on to Kharegates by appointment to meet Mrs Atkinson the wife of the Hon'ble Mr Atkinson, member of [the] council. The lady is an amateur artist and we were very glad to make her acquaintance.

Friday 7th November 1902

Tonight we were again invited by the Kharegates to meet Mrs Bernard, a lady who had long wished to see us. This Lady and Miss Kharegate and her brother sang and played on the piano by turns till 11.

Saturday 8th November 1902

There was very heavy rain last night. It commenced while we were at the Kharigates. Mrs Bernard is one of the fattest ladies I have seen. She sings and plays very well.

Sunday 9th November 1902

This evening at 5.30 we visited the Malayali Club in response to an invitation from the Malayalies here.

Monday 10th November 1902

Last evening a large number of Malayali gentlemen were at the club to meet us. Mr C. Karunakara Menon welcomed us in a speech and spoke about what we have done for Art. I made a reply on behalf of my brother and myself.

Tuesday 11th November 1902

This evening we paid a visit to the Princes of Cochin of whom [+++] Ravi Varma, the First Prince is an old acquaintance having been introduced to us by the late First Prince of Travancore. We spent nearly an hour in conversation.

Wednesday 12th November 1902

The Princes returned our visit spending a long time in our studio. My health is again worse. I have [a] severe headache probably owing to overwork. We had a walk on the beach. The day cold and wet.

Thursday 13th November 1902

We had a visit from Mrs Atkinson, Miss Kharegate and Mr G.H.B. Jackson, I.C.S., who spent a long time looking at the several paintings. They liked the portrait of Sir Bhashyam best.

Friday 14th November 1902

This evening I paid a professional visit to Dr Robertson, the best physician in [+++] to consult him about my ailment. He has given me a prescription and advised me to take regular exercise to assist the effects of the medicine.

Saturday 15th November 1902

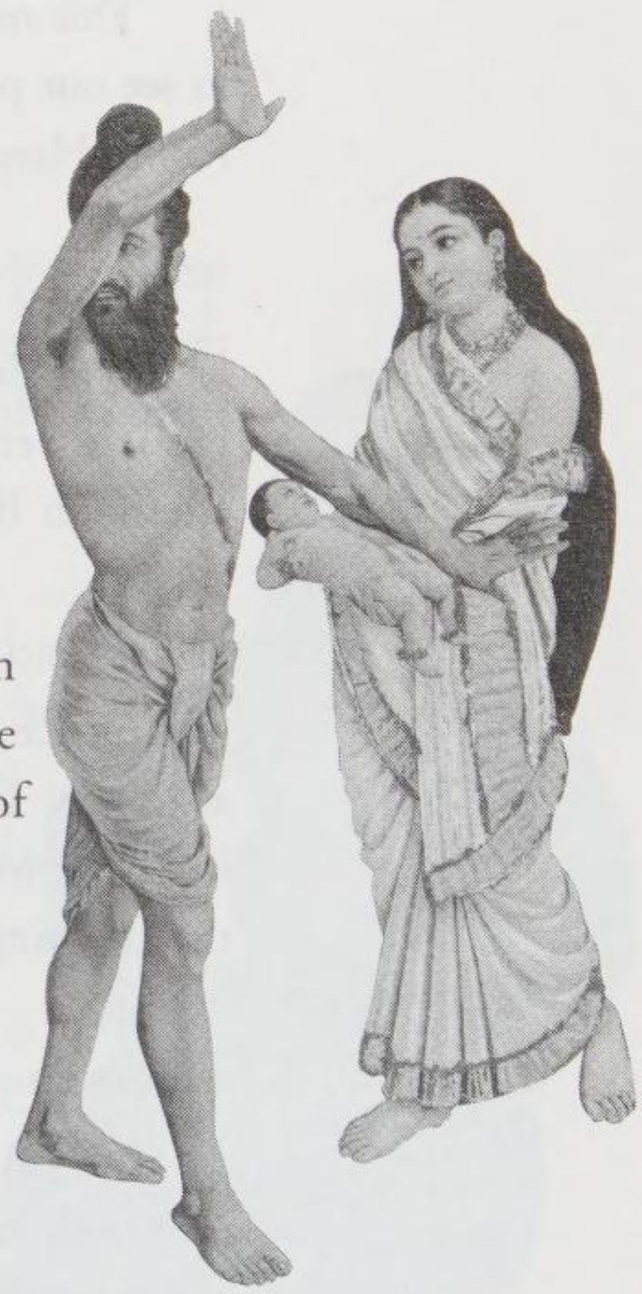
This morning I unpacked my painting of Hussain Sagar, returned to me from Hyderabad. Received from Ms Permanurad Das Rs 383–8 being the balance of Rs 400 the price of a painting sold by him after deducing certain sundry expenses.

Sunday 16th November 1902

I commenced to take Dr Robertson's medicine to day. The day [was] wet and rainy and so we did not go out.

Monday 17th November 1902

To day I wrote to Messers A.K. Joshi and Co. to pay Hassansait[?] Rs 77-12 and Mr Anant Shivaji Rs 27-12 and post them to our account. Appay left for Bombay today. We paid a visit to the Raja of Kollengodu.

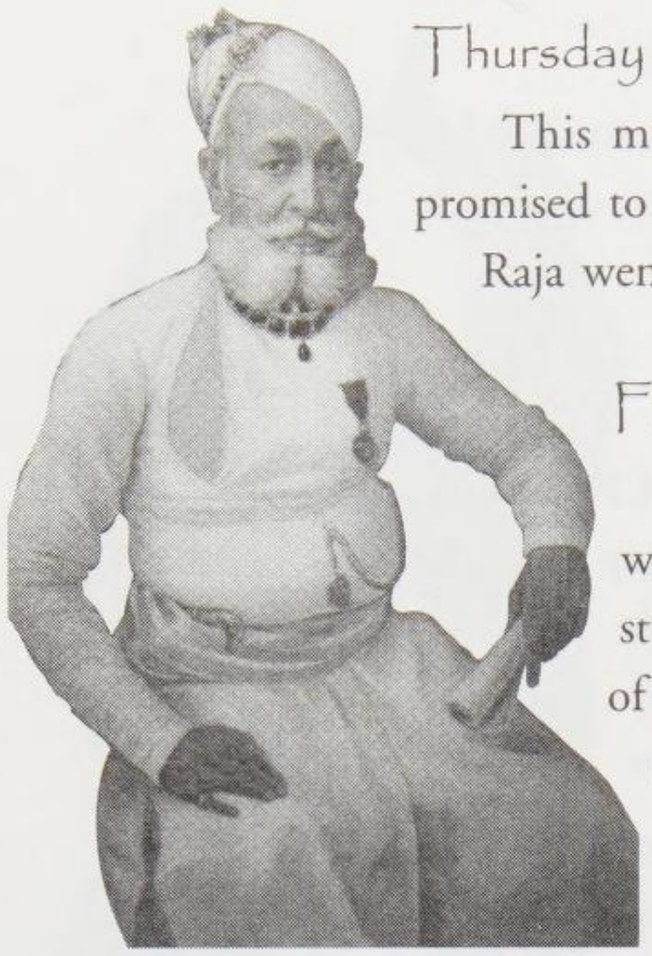


Tuesday 18th November 1902

This evening at 5 p.m. we paid a visit to Mr & Mrs Atkinson according to the latter's friend's invitation. Our friends the Kharegates mother and daughter were present. We saw some of Mrs Atkinson's paintings.

Wednesday 19th November 1902

Received a sitting from Justice Subramany Iyer. We had made him from the photo rather young and so we had to alter a good deal to make him look as at present. He was talking on religious & philosophical subjects.



Thursday 20th November 1902

This morning the Raja of Kollengodu came to meet Mr Sim who had promised to visit our studio between 11 & 12, but as he did not turn up, the Raja went away. A few minutes after Mr Sim came and saw our works.

Friday 21st November 1902

At about 2 p.m. we called on Ms Winterbotham; though he was at lunch he came out and met us and promised to call at our studio on Monday. In the evening we went to the Diamond Jubilee of Pachayyappa's College. Lord Ampthill presided and addressed the assembly.

Saturday 22nd November 1902

Today afternoon I went out shopping and next visited the Museum Art Gallery where there are five paintings of mine, three landscapes two figures. In the evening we went to Triplicane to hear a Hari Kirtan.

Sunday 23rd November 1902

This evening at 5 we visited Mr & Mrs Young, the latter a clever artist. She showed us some of her works. Her still-life painting is very good. Colouring is rich and harmonious.

Monday 24th November 1902

This morning at 8 Mr & Mrs & Miss Winterbotham called at our studio to see our paintings. They liked them much Mrs Winterbotham thought that Sir Arthur Havelock should look five years older. Visited the Khargates in the evening.

Tuesday 25th November 1902

The Hon'ble Mr J.A. Atkinson gave us a sitting this morning for his bust. He is a very good gentleman, of a rather humorous turn of mind. In the afternoon Balia Naidu's wife gave sitting. Sent Raman Kutty to Beypur.

Wednesday 26th November 1902

Justice Sir Subramania Iyer gave sitting. G. Parameswaran Pillay, Barrister at Law & Dr S.M. Nair called. The former who lately returned from England is leaving for Travancore to practice there. The Raja of Venkatagiri called to see the paintings.

Thursday 27th November 1902

Mr J.A. Atkinson gave us this morning his second sitting. He keeps up very lively conversation. His head is very good for picture. Mr Balia's wife gave her second sitting in the afternoon. The day wet & gloomy.

Friday 28th November 1902

This morning we received a letter from the Sheristadar of (Revenue and Agricultural Department) in confirmation of Bombay Government telegram of 19th to ask if my brother is willing to serve in the judging committee of the Delhi Art Exhibition.

Saturday 29th November 1902

We visited Mr L[+++] Wy[+++] [L.M. Wyneh] Private Secretary this noon at 1.30 and made an appointment to show our works to the Governor on Wednesday next. We next visited Mr Thurston to consult about going to Delhi.

Sunday 30th November 1902

In the afternoon Justice Sir Subramani Iyer gave us another sitting. We did not go out driving.

Monday 1st December 1902

This morning Mr Atkinson gave his last sitting. Mrs Atkinson thought that the face looked a little too pink. The colour has been considerably improved today. Dr Walt's reply regarding accommodation received.

Tuesday 2nd December 1902

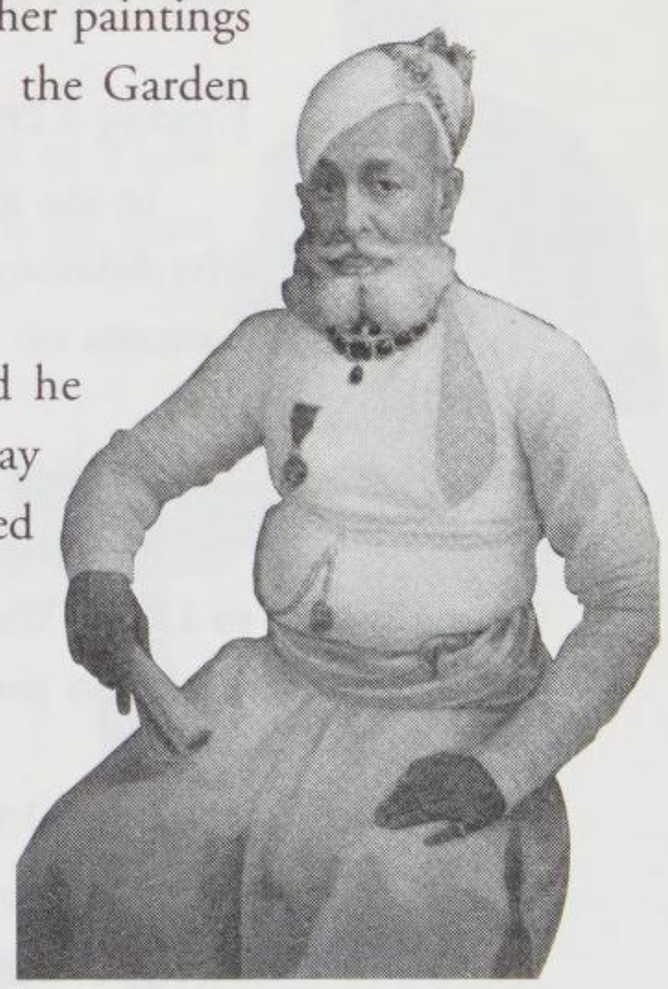
We wrote this morning to the Chief Secretary to the Madras Government, if they could provide us with accommodation in case my brother accepted the Bombay Government invitation to be Judge, Delhi Exhibition.

Wednesday 3rd December 1902

Went to the Banqueting Hall and painted till 3 the robes and decorations. Lord and Lady Ampthill[194] came and inspected the portrait and other paintings and expressing greatly [*sic*] pleased with them. We next went to the Garden Party in honour of Sir George Moore; heavy rain.

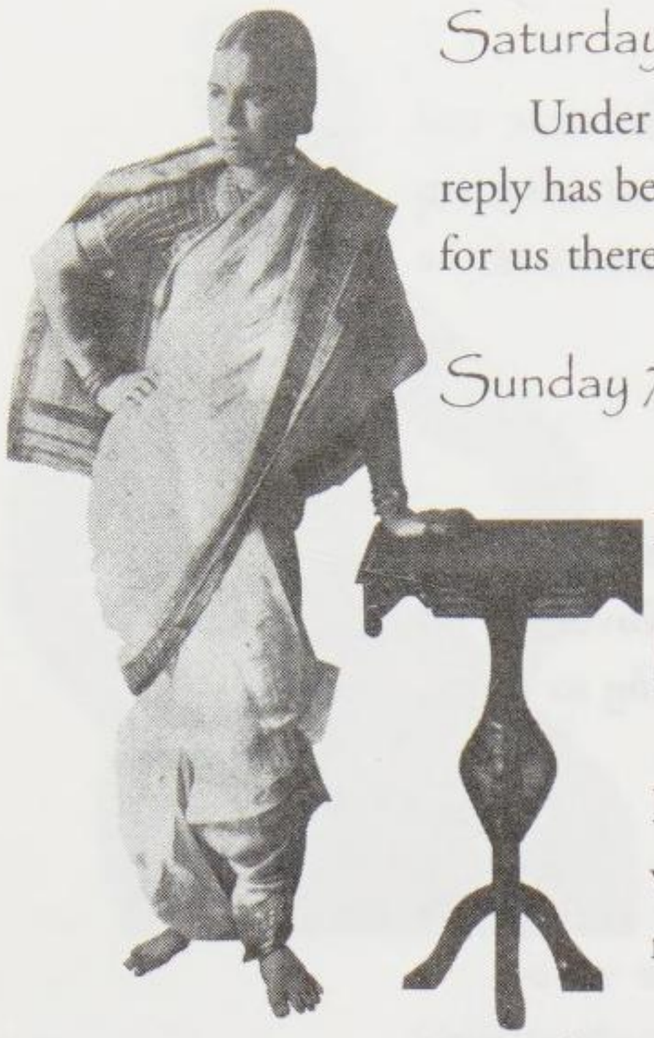
Thursday 4th December 1902

Yesterday when we met the Governor. His Excellency said he regretted he could not help us but we should apply to the Bombay Govt. through which the invitation was received. We have telegraphed to Bombay.



Friday 5th December 1902

Mr Atkinson gave us his fifth sitting. The painting of the face is good, but likeness requires improvement. In the evening we went to the beach after visiting Messers Wren Bennet & Co.



Saturday 6th December 1902

Under the circumstances I don't think it possible to visit Delhi since no reply has been received from the Bombay Government regarding accommodation for us there. We have given up the idea.

Sunday 7th December 1902

In the evening we visited first the Kharegates and next the 6th Prince of Cochin whose amiability is beyond all praises.

Monday 8th December 1902

In the morning the Kharegates called on us and a little later Dr T.M. Nair called with Mr Bannerji and his wife. In the evening we dined with the Raja of Kollengode's brother at the invitation of his mother-in-law.

Tuesday 9th December 1902

Sir Subramani Iyer gave us another sitting. Sir Bhasyam came to see his portrait. In the afternoon the Honourable Subba Rao came with the Raja of Vollur and spoke about certain portrait being executed for them.

Wednesday 10th December 1902

Visited Mr G.J. MacKenzie the Resident at 7.45 a.m. at the Buckingham Hotel. The Raja of South Vellur gave us two orders, one for his own portrait and the other of his father. We took a sketch of his head; his father is dead.

Thursday 11th December 1902

Tonight we went to the Connemare Library where a scientific conversation was held at the instance of Ms Thurston. The Governor and a large number of ladies and gentlemen were present. The display was very instructive.

Friday 12th December 1902

In the afternoon we visited Mr & Mrs Atkinson's in order to select one of Mrs Atkinson's Landscapes which [we] are to have in exchange for her husband's portraits we have painted. We selected a scenery of Madras.

Saturday 13th December 1902

His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore arrived this morning on his way to Delhi. We were present at the platform, some of the leading men of Madras were also present.

Sunday 14th December 1902

Visited the Maharaja at 11.30. Subba Rao paid Rs 300 as advance for three portraits and a copy of a bust.

Monday 15th December 1902

Received Rupees 600 from Mr Sivaswami Iyer for portrait of Justice Subramani Iyer and Bhashyam Iyengar. In the evening paid a visit to Mr H.C. Clerk who showed us some of his sketches and paintings. Some of them were very good.

Tuesday 16th December 1902

Finished Sir Subramany Iyer's portrait. Received [a] letter from the Gaikwar's Secretary asking if we could go to Baroda to paint a portrait of His Highness. In the evening visited the Dewan of Travancore and he regretted he could not give us any help for our visit to Delhi for reasons well known to us.

Wednesday 17th December 1902

The Maharaja left for Bezwada via Wadi owing to breaches on the East Coast Railway. We went to Major R. Robertson I.M.S. to consult him about Brother's state of health. He promised to prescribe after examining urine. Visited the Kharegates next.

Thursday 18th December 1902

Mr J. Singan Mudaliar sent Rs 1000 today having sent us already Rs 500. We have received the full price of Col. Sir George Moore's portrait. In the evening visited the Central Station where a large rush of passengers was seen going to Delhi.

Friday 19th December 1902

In the evening drove to the Marina where we had our walk [,] Mr C. Karunakara Menon having joined us there.

Saturday 20th December 1902

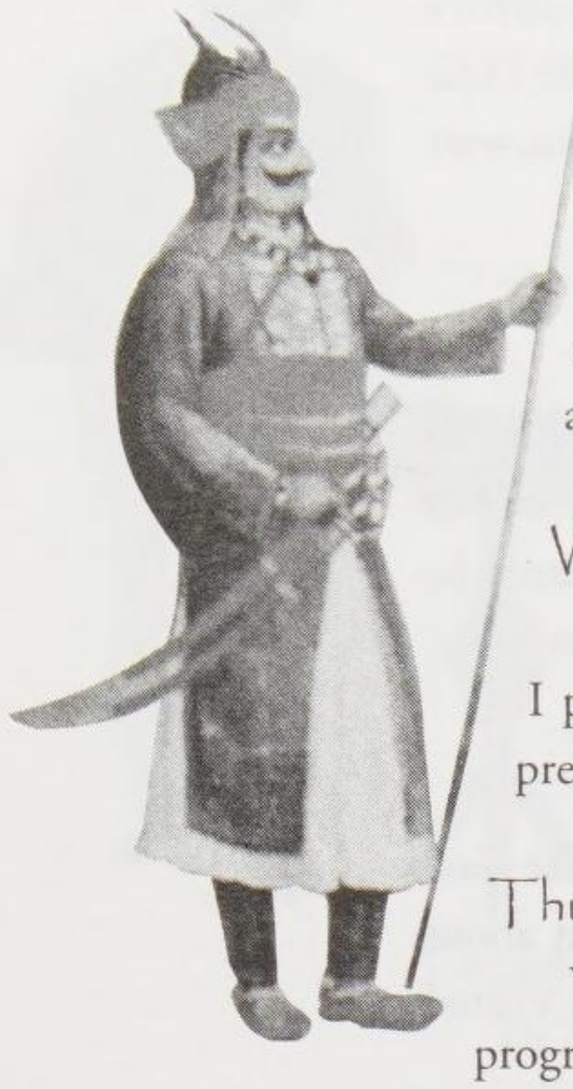
Paid a visit to Ms Thomson the second member of Council at 12.30 p.m. We had about half an hour's conversation. His appearance is far from agreeable and he is curt[+++] speech.

Sunday 21st December 1902

Visited the Kharegates 5 p.m. Gave a feast to a select few Malayalees among whom were C. Karunakara Menon, Narayana Menon Peshkar.

Monday 22nd December 1902

I must say a word about the Kharegates' family. We became first acquainted with Miss A. Kharegate, a very intelligent young



lady having a thorough English education. Her brother M.R. Kharegate is an officer in the Madras Engineering Department.

Tuesday 23rd December 1902

Visited Whiteaway Laidlaw and purchased 6 pillow cases, handkerchiefs and socks. Next Purchased stationary [*sic*] at Sundaralingam and drove to the town where two steel trunks for Rs 28 were bought, as also some minor things.

Wednesday 24th December 1902

Today too I went out shopping again visiting Waren Bennet where I purchased certain things and drove to the fruit market to buy some for presents to our friends tomorrow.

Thursday 25th December 1902

We sent some fruit to Miss Kharegate as [a] Christmas Present. Our program has been altered. We cannot leave before the 31st since Brother is very particular about an auspicious day.

Friday 26th December 1902

Received [a] reply from the Gaikwar's Secretary accepting our terms and asking us to visit Baroda on His Highness' return from Delhi. Day again wet and gloomy. Ordered Moses to make two suits for us for Rs 118.

Saturday 27th December 1902

Visited the Park Fair this evening for the 2nd time. There was an immense crowd to day. We went to a booth where a Mahratta Brahmin was singing Hindusthani songs. We sat for half an hour and returned home.

Sunday 28th December 1902

I visited the Kharegates and took leave of them previous to our departure on the 31st dusk.

Monday 29th December 1902

Visited Dr Robertson to consult about Brother's treatment after our departure. He thinks that the disease is not diabetes and that the sugar in the urine will disappear by continuing his medicines.

Tuesday 30th December 1902

Received intimation that A.K. Joshi & Co. have remitted Rs 4000 to the National Bank. We went to the Bank and gave [a] receipt for the money but could not receive the sum owing to the Christmas Holidays.

Wednesday 31st December 1902

We gave up the idea of starting for Kollengodu to day as the coronation festivities in the city promise to be most interesting. Visited the Park Fair which was more crowded than [+++].

1903

Thursday 1st January 1903

This morning we went to the Island to see the parade of troops; at 4 p.m. attended the Durbar at the Government house when the King's proclamation[195] was read and at 8 went out to see the illumination.

Friday 2nd January 1903

Went to the National Bank at about 2 p.m. and after transaction business left in the evening by Mail for Kollengodu. Some friends had assembled at the station to see us off.

Saturday 3rd January 1903

Reached Palghat at about 10 and after breakfast and a short nap started for Kollengode a distance of nearly 12 miles. Raja Vasudewan received us kindly.

Sunday 4th January 1903

We began the completion of the Raja's Mother's Portrait.

Notes for 1903

Y Naraiyana[?] Moorthy B.A.
Private Secretary to the Raja of Kurupam

From December to April
Lady Harilal Ramlal Shab
Near Bans Gali Bazar, Almora N.N.P.

From April to December
Lala Harilal &
Khumbar Chetty
Post Office Joshi Madh
Road[?] Badrinarayan
District Parhival N.W.P.

Counsel General,
Baron Wartegg, Villow (Villa[?] Tubstein[?])
Luadin[?] Switzerland

Raja Bhagwan Das Hari Das
to H.H. The Nizam

Miss B. Edilji Dastur c/o Mr R. Dastur, oil stuff dealer[?]
Secunderabad.

Lord Ampthill the Governor in his coronation address this year, exhorts the Graduates to cultivate a taste for art and travel in these words:

There are two things which I should like to recommend in particular to the young men of Southern India as means of increasing and spreading culture. The first is Art and the second is travel, for as regards both of these things it seems to me that you have still much to learn. I shall not enlarge on the advantages of Art and travel as they are subjects by themselves. Suffice it to say that some form of Arts should be the hobby of every cultured man, the whet-stone on which he keeps his intellect keen, the pastime of his leisure moments, the ever ready relaxations on his jaded faculties and pleasant medium and social intercourse with his intellectual equals.

The size of my painting 'The Fiesta' to be framed for the next Madras Fine Arts Exhibition is 34 x 32.

'Women and Artist' map[?] O'Red to be had of Messers Higginbotham's & Co. for 1–12.

P. Narayana Iyer. High Court Vakil, Madras.

C.C. Dutt; Indian Civil Service, Alibag.

The number of the receipt granted to me by Messers Arbuthnot & Co. on the 20th October 1903 for [Rs 6000] Six thousand placed with them on fixed deposit for one year is H. 6438.

The number of another receipt given me by the same firm on the 30th October 1902 for Rs 4000 on fixed deposit is H. 6633.

The number of a third receipt for Rs 2000 deposited with the same firm on the 13th November 1903 is H. 6941.

The next number of the pebbles for my spectacles is plus 250e. To be had from Messers M.T. Madons and Co., Chemists, 24 Abdul Rahman Street,

Market, Bombay.

Thursday 1st January 1903

The coronation day of King Edward VII. There is rejoicing all over India. In Delhi where the Grand Durbar is held by Lord Curzon are assembled all the Indian Chiefs. We postponed our departure from Madras in order to witness the celebration in the Southern Capital. We saw the parade on the Island, it was disappointing. In the afternoon we went to the Government House to

hear the reading of the Proclamation and at night drove through the Principal thoroughfares and streets to see the illumination.

Friday 2nd January 1903

We went to the National Bank at about 1 p.m. to get receipt for the Rs 4000 we have left with them. We added another six-hundred and thus invested in the Bank on current deposit Rs 4600 at 2 percent interest. We left Madras after a four months' stay by the Mail at 6.15 p.m. The brother of the Raja of Kollengodu was our fellow passenger. Mr Karunakaran Menon, Editor of 'The Hindu' and few other friends came to see us off.

Saturday 3rd January 1903

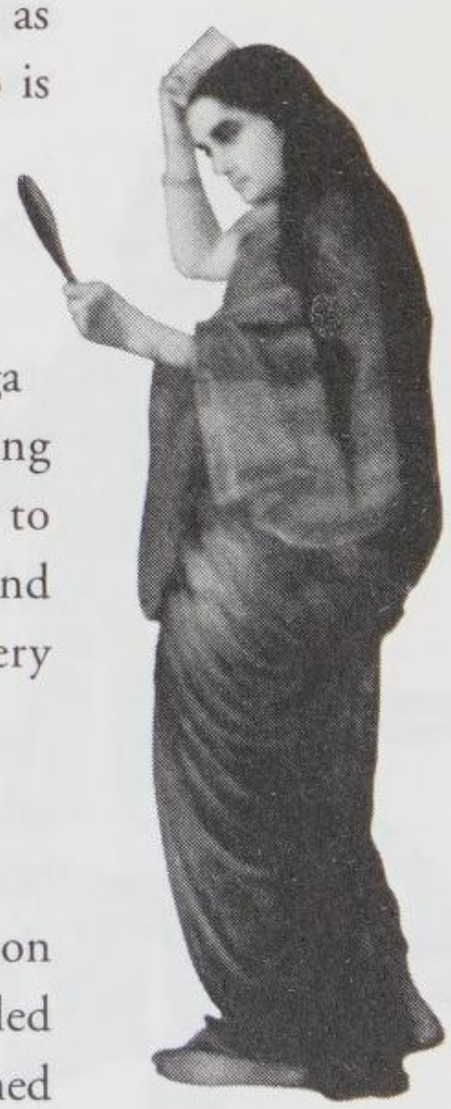
Arrived at Olavakote at about 9.30 and drove to Palghat with the carriage sent by the Raja of Kollengode whose guests we were then. He had built a new bungalow at Palghat. We left the place in the afternoon for Kollengode a distance of 12 miles. We arrived at our destination at dusk and were very kindly received by the Raja.

Sunday 4th January 1903

In the morning we worked a little on the Raja's Mother's portrait. In the evening took a walk to Kachankuchi, an old and picturesquely situated temple of Perumar.

Monday 5th January 1903

I ought to have mentioned that we received telegram at Palghat saying that our eldest cousin and the head of our family who has been ailing for a year is seriously ill and we should return home as early as possible. We shall start as soon as we finish our work. Received a sitting from the Raja's mother who is represented as sitting.

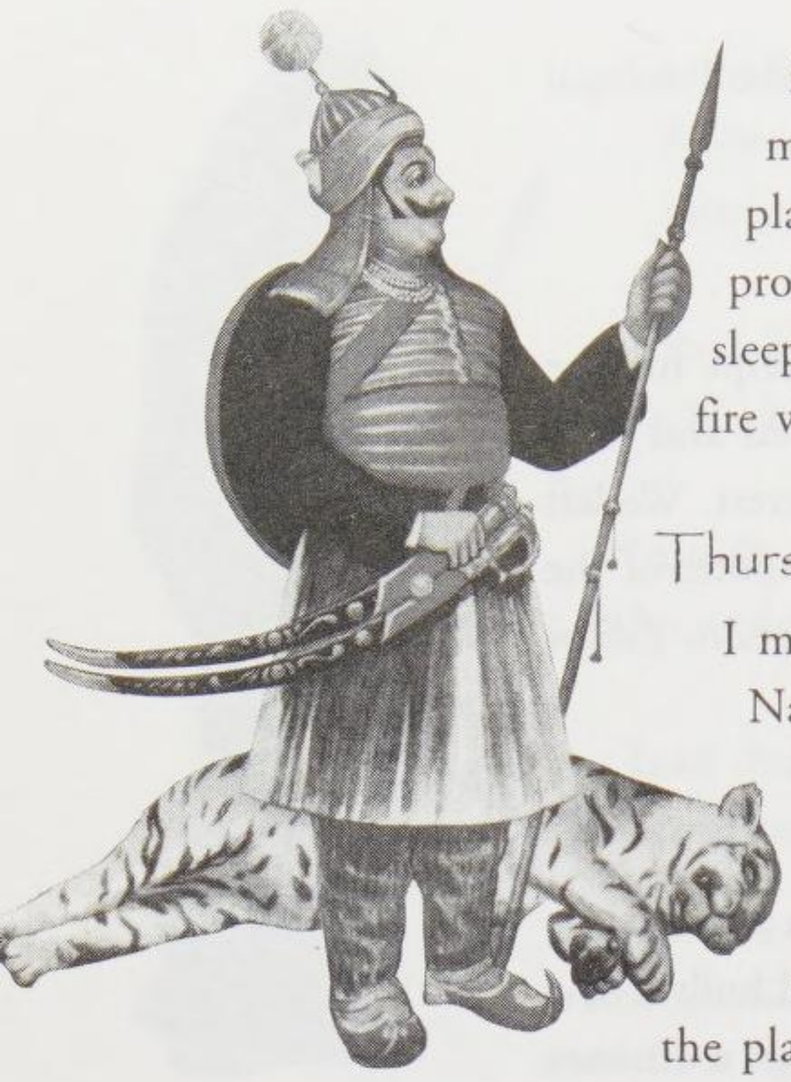


Tuesday 6th January 1903

This evening the Raja's sister, a girl of 17 sang some Varnams and Iyaga Iyer's Kirthanams. She had a clear and melodious voice, but the teaching I think has been defective. When she stopped, I was requested by her to sing and I sang for an hour and fortunately for me my voice was clear and my performance was applauded by the family. We spent the evening very pleasantly.

Wednesday 7th January 1903

Today is the 'Aarat'[196] in the temple of Sastha and it is a grand occasion here. A large crowd of people from the neighbouring villages had assembled and the procession with the Gods on the backs of elephants richly caparisoned



in the torch light was a striking sight. In the small hours of the morning the God was taken back to the temple from the resting place provided for it near the palace. We had to accompany the procession though we did not like to have been disturbed from our sleep. The tamasha[197] came to a close at day break with a display of fire works.

Thursday 8th January 1903

I must say a few words about the Raja of Kollengode. The post of Nampidi[198] is one of the necessary institutions of Malabar. No Brahmin can perform yagna[199] without his sanction. The present Nampidi is an enlightened young man who has acquired the title of Raja from the Government. He has opened a High School at Kollengode and is doing a great deal for the improvement of the place…

Friday 9th January 1903

…His mother whose portrait we are painting is an elderly lady of above fifty. During her son's minority she had managed the estates with conspicuous ability and tact. The chief owns large tracts of forests where elephants and other wild game are abundant and he has the idea of giving us an elephant in return for his mother's portrait for which we have declined to receive any money.

Saturday 10th January 1903

We have given the finishing touches to the portrait today. The work is not as satisfactory as we should have wished. We left Kollengodu at night after supper. The moon shone bright and our drive of nearly 12 miles to Palghat was pleasant. Raja Vasudevan, the Nampidi accompanied us.

Sunday 11th January 1903

We took breakfast at 8 and drove to the Olavekote Station only to miss the train. We started by the next train two hours later and reached Ferok at about 5 p.m. and crossed the river to Beypur where we stay for a week.

Monday 12th January 1903

We are the guests of the Raja of Puthya-Kovilakom one of the branches of the Beypure House. We are all relatives though we had separated from each other long long ago. The title of Koil Thampuran is peculiar to Travancore, here we are all Rajas. Beside Puthiya Kovilakom there are three other houses closely related to it Manayam and Nadial and Panangad. The last house is unoccupied, its members having emigrated and settled in Travancore, Malabar being taken by Tipu.

Tuesday 13th January 1903

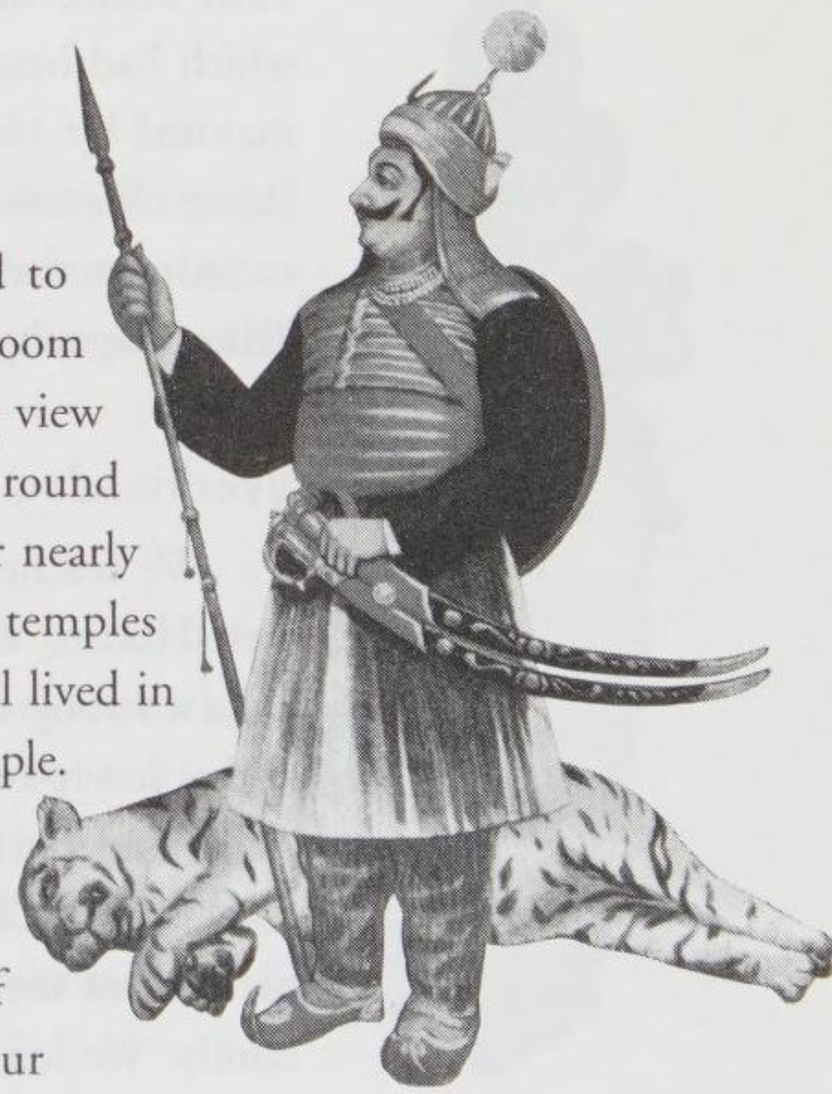
We breakfasted at Manayam this morning where there are two male members left now. Near this Kovilakam or house is a temple of Vettakaruman or the Hunter God which it is said and acknowledged by its present owners, the Manayam Rajahs, once belonged to us of the Tattari Kovilakam house, by which our family was known before we settled at Kilimanur in Travancore. We drove to Calicut this evening and are the guests of Ms K.C. Shrivirasayan Raja at Chalapuram.

Wednesday 14th January 1903

This morning at 11 we paid a visit to Ms Pinhey the Collector and his wife. Mrs Pinhey is an amateur painter and she showed us many of her paintings and sketches. Some of them were very good indeed. At 4 p.m. Mr T.G. Vargese the Deputy Collector called on us and we requested him to help us in getting on the old [+++] accounts in the Huzur office and trace some of our lost property in the Ernand Taluq. He has promised us every help. At 6 p.m. we visited the Cosmopolitan club at the invitation of its members. The [+++] of the Calicut Native Society were present to welcome us. We visited next the Puti[?] and the Railway Station and returned to our lodging.

Thursday 15th January 1903

We left Calicut this morning and drove to Nadial where we were to breakfast with our relatives. In the afternoon we started on foot to Nerumkaith Kotta where there is an ancient temple of Sastha, our tutelary deity. The distance is about five or six miles and the way extremely bad. We had to cross two ferries and pass over a rugged hill. We reached the place at sunset. The temple stands on the side of a barren hill and has the appearance from below of a castle with stone walls.



Friday 16th January 1903

On the top of the Hill stands another temple dedicated to Bhagavati or Goddess Kali with a solitary mango tree now in bloom to the north west of it. From this point there is a commanding view of the country around and the sea to which the river that winds round the hill empties its waters. When we finally settled at Kilimanur nearly a century and half ago our ancestors took care to build their temples both to Sastha and Kali. It is said that at one period when we all lived in one family we had our palace on the top of this hill near Kali's temple.

Saturday 17th January 1903

Early this morning walked two miles to the south west of the temple to the site where our Kovilakam stood before our

migration to Travancore. There is no doubt that we owned extensive estates here once, but most of them have now passed into other hands. The object of our present visit is to trace and recover the lost property if possible since the settlement is now going on. The greater portion of our property is in the Vallikunnom Omshom[?].

Sunday 18th January 1903

Yesterday was a festive day in the temple of Sastha and at night in the small hours when fireworks [were] being let off a rocket fell on a house close to where we were staying. The house was in flames and we were roused by the screams of the inmates for help. People came for help and put out the fire. We gave the sufferers Rs 10[.] Left the place.

Monday 19th January 1903

We received the arrears of rent from some of our tenants. After breakfast we left Pathiya Kovilkam for Feroke to catch the train. We went in boats. Brother stepped into the sub-registrar's office to register a power of attorney to authorise Purnam Pill [Pillay] whom we leave behind and another to manage the property in this place. We left by the Mail train at 11 a.m. At Shoranur where we changed to the Cochin Railway we met Mr Mackenzie, the British Resident returning from the Delhi Durbar. He travelled with us up to Trichur. We took supper at Ernakulam and left by boat at 10 p.m.

Tuesday 20th January 1903

At Ernakulam, last night we were the guests of the Prince Rama Varma, 13th Prince of Cochin and the direct nephew of the Raja. Our cabin-boat, which had been ordered as usual from Quilon was large and spacious and was manned by 16 rowers. We reached Alleppy this morning and alighted at the Palace. We saw Mr Mathe—the commercial agent and magistrate—who came to inspect the palace as it is under his charge. In the evening we reached Trikunnapuzha where we had some refreshments.

Wednesday 21st January 1903

We reached Quilon this morning and had our breakfast at the Asramam Rest-House. We left at about 12 o'clock and when we reached the Paravur Lake a strong land-breeze common at this occasion was blowing and there was such a heavy swell that no canoes dared to cross the lake. Our boat big as it was rolled and pitched and struggled against the wind and waves. At sundown we reached the Chelakore Rest-House in the Warkalay Canal where we had the pleasure of meeting Kunjaru Raja of Ennacud and a member of the Gramam family. We left after supper.

Thursday 22nd January 1903

Arrived at Trivandrum this morning and to our great joy learned that the health of our cousin, the Kochu Koil Thampuran about which we had been painfully anxious had undergone a sudden change for the better under the treatment of a Terja Physician of Cannanore. We paid our respects to H.H. the Maharaja who returned from Delhi in good health last morning. Next visited the young Ranis.

Friday 23rd January 1903

A telegram was sent to Baroda to enquire of the Gaikwar's secretary when His Highness would be pleased to have us at his court. I wrote letters to the 13th Prince of Cochin, Mr Edgar Thurston, Hon. Secretary Fine Arts Society, Madras, the Hon'ble Mr Sein of the Revenue Board, Madras etc.

Saturday 24th January 1903

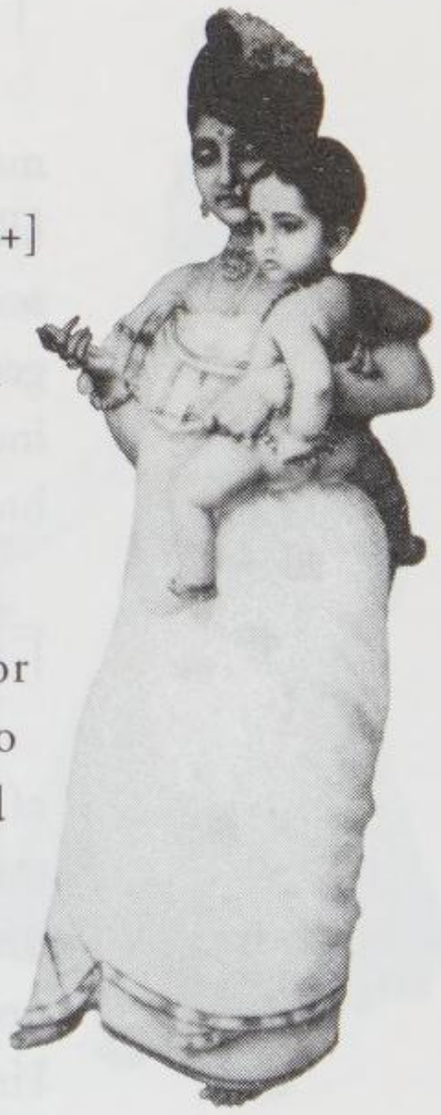
My cousin K. Raja Raja Varma returned from Kilimanur with K. Ravi Varma or Ithammar as he is commonly called, one of our nephews who has passed his F.A. Examination this year. My wife's younger sister has lost her last child and so she has gone to stay with the bereaved mother.

Wednesday 28th January 1903

I and my cousin took leave of H.H. the Maharaja at 2 p.m. and at 4 went to Thevarathu Koikal to see the young Ranis. The Senior Rani and her mother had gone for their evening drive, the Junior Rani was playing with a maid servant. As soon as she saw us approach her she left off playing and stood looking down smiling. She was very shy and answered our questions only by 'yes' and 'no'. We left for Kilimanur at night.

Monday 2nd February 1903

Today we sent a letter to the secretary to the National Bank to [+++] us the Rs 4600 we have deposited with them on the 2nd January last. Brother arrived here this morning from Trivandrum. He is not quite restored to health.



Tuesday 3rd February 1903

We wrote to Raja Permanurad Das to sell the Nizam's portrait for Rs 900, the amount offered by him, and to Ms Schlicker [Schleicher] to send the balance of the money due to us—Rs 10,000—before the end of this month if he wanted to avail himself of the terms we had offered him in November. A telegram from Prince Ravi Varma 16th Prince of Cochin informed us that he has passed his final B.A. examination in Sanskrit.

Monday 9th February 1903

Wrote to the manager National Bank enclosing a cheque for Rs 4480 in my favour drawn by Brother and also sent a letter of Brother asking the payment of the money to me. Sent an other registered letter to Messers Weile and Klune enclosing a cheque for Rs 120 being the price of a gilt frame supplied to us. The cheque book has been returned to the bank as desired by the manager.

Today is the 3rd day of the Ulsavom in our temple.

Tuesday 10th February 1903

Having nothing worth recording I may say a few words about the festival now going on in our temple. During my boyhood and before that the Ulsavom was a very poor thing. One elephant from the Royal stables at Trivandrum used to be sent on the payment of a fee of Rs 8. Its trappings were of the most shabby kind. We have now two elephants of our own, the larger, which was purchased for Rs 3000 by my brother is a noble animal…

Wednesday 11th February 1903

…He is still young and will grow bigger still. The other is a present to us from the late Maharaja of Mysore. He is presented to our God and is therefore named Ayyappan. We have now got new trappings of gold and silver which are admired by all. They are of the Northern or Trichur fashion. Ten years ago the copper flag staff or Stambha was planted in front of the temple. Before that our flag staff during the Ulsavom was only temporary, having been made of the trunk of an arecanut palm. It was uprooted as soon as the festival was over. Next was…

Thursday 12th February 1903

…erected the Elephant Porch[200] in front of the flag staff. The old thatched mud walls surrounding the temple were replaced by stone walls. During the Ulsavom there used to be only one set of flute player[201] now a days three and some times four sets are invited. Expenditure on oil for torches and lighting generally for feasting the Brahmins and other items have [*sic*] been considerably increased. There is improvement all round. It is all due to the keen interest my brother takes in the temple.

Friday 13th February 1903

The Pallivetta or the Divine hunting day of our God Sastha. The best part of the day's program is the procession in which the image will be taken from the temple to the front of my house where a miniature grove has been made under the big banyan tree[202] with three coconuts to represent game. The procession went off well. A large crowd had assembled to witness the sight. Fire-works were let off on the return procession.

Saturday 14th February 1903

This is the last day of the Ulsavom. Last night's procession after it reached the temple was a little spoilt by a heavy shower. We had to wait till the rain ceased to complete [the] round of procession. The crowd that had gathered was inconvenienced a good deal. When we went to bed it was past 1 o'clock.

Sunday 15th February 1903

Today's ceremony consisted of sacrifices to the Goddess on the right hand of Sastha and a procession on a small scale. The elephant used through out was our own called Govinda.

Monday 16th February 1903

This morning at about 5.30 three ladies of our family, two of my Cousins and my sister[203] started for Attingal, where the young Ranis with their mother (my brother's elder daughter) were staying. Four servants of the Ranis had been sent to escort them. A Patta Karan, Harikara and two personal attendants of the Ranis [,] my brother and my nephew Kerala Varma, the Senior Rani's father accompanied them. The junior Rani's mother (my brother's second daughter) is away at Marvelikara at present.

Tuesday 17th February 1903

Brother came back from Attingal this morning. I received a letter from the National Bank returning to me the cheque of Rs 4480 which he had issued in my favour on the ground that the signature on the cheque differed from that left in the office. My brother has written today to explain the mistake and asked their advice as to what should be done to draw the amount.

Wednesday 18th February 1903

Yesterday I sent a money order for Rs 12 to the Bombay Gazette, Rs 5 to the 'Prabasi' being our subscription to it for the last and current years; and also one of Rs 3 to the 'Tarascote' a Hindu magazine for the current year. Today two money orders were sent one to D.B. Taraperwala Sons & Co. Bombay for The Magazine of Art for the current year, & Rs 6 to the 'Arya' being subscriptions to the same for the current and last years. My cousins and sister and children returned from Attingal.

Saturday 21st February 1903

The Madras Fine Arts Exhibition is to be opened to day by the Governor. Between my brother and myself we have exhibited ten paintings. 'Fair daughters of Malabar', 'King Aja's lament', 'Temple Steps' and the portrait of Sir Justice Bhasyam and Subramany Iyer are Brother's,

Sir G. Moore's (portrait) is signed by both of us. Hon'ble J.N. Atkinson's portrait, 'An old Mosque' & 'Hussain Sagar'—landscapes—are mine.

Sunday 22nd February 1903

Received a telegram this morning from Madhava Raja of Kollengodu to say that I have been awarded the first price [*sic*] for landscape for my painting of the 'Hussain Sagar Tank, Hyderabad'.

Friday 27th February 1903

This evening at 5 o'clock I and my cousin K.R.R. with two Namboodiris left Kilimanur. Being new moon we could not take any substantial supper, we had therefore taken with us some milk and cakes of rice which we ate on the rocks below the new bridge over the river at Puvanpara by lamplight. We left the place at about 8. Having hired two canoes one for us and the other for the servants and luggage.

Saturday 28th February 1903

Reached Chakkey landing place at Trivandrum at about 7.30 and drove to our house in the Fort in a hired bullock carriage. Visited our cousin, the Kochu Koil Thampuran who shows no signs of improvement. The swelling over his lower limbs has increased considerably since I saw him last. Visited the Maharaja and the Princesses in the afternoon.

Monday 1st March 1903

Read in the 'Madras Mail' of the 23rd February the first notice about the pictures in the Exhibition now open at Madras.

Our pictures—my brother's portrait and my landscapes—were praised generally and my latest four landscape paintings are admitted.

Tuesday 2nd March 1903

Received a letter from the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor, thanking Brother for the copies of his life published by the Indian Press, Allahabad[204] sent to his Excellency. Dr Peter Lalitman visited eldest cousin for the fourth time this evening. He thinks that there is a slight change for the better in which we too agree. May God soon restore him to good health again. The Madras Times received today has only praise for my Landscape which has won [a] prize.

Wednesday 4th March 1903

I sent today to the manager [of] National Bank of India a cheque for [Rupees] 4480 for cashing and another for Rupees 120 to Messers Wite & Klein. I hope this time they will be satisfied with the signature etc.

Thursday 5th March 1903

This morning my brother and I paid a visit to the convent of the Holy Angels at the desire of Mr MacKenzie to see a certain painting the nuns have with them and give our opinion regarding [+++]. We saw the work which is a study of roses. I think that the flowers want the freshness of nature; they look more like artificial flowers. The back ground is the best part of the work. We were shown round the classes by one of the sisters.

Friday 6th March 1903

The letter which was written on Brother's behalf to Mr Schlucker [Schleicher] under yesterday's date was posted today in a registered cover. In it he was asked to fix the time of the next payment and told that if he delayed settlement any longer the favourable terms at first offered will not be granted.

Saturday 7th March 1903

This evening at 4.30 took my little nephew and Kunjunni to the Public Gardens and the Museum. They seemed to enjoy their drive very much. They have only lately come to Trivandrum and joined the school and so they have not seen the sights of the town. We returned home at about 6.30.

Sunday 8th March 1903

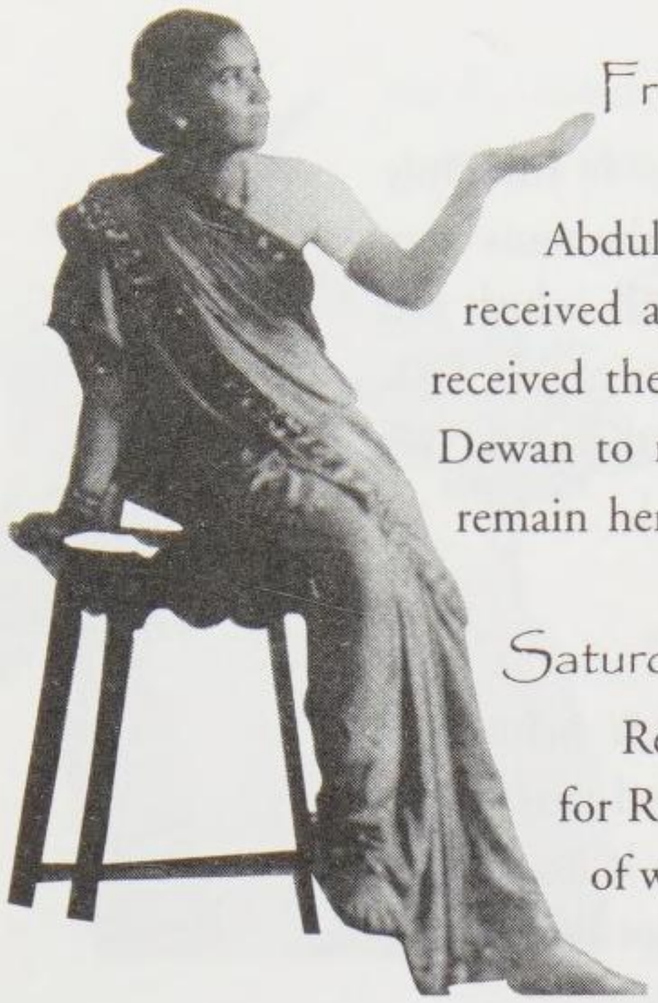
When I got myself weighted[205] [*sic*] I found my weight was 129 1/2 lbs. My cousin K.R.R. weighed 113 lbs, Raja 64 and Kunjunni 52 lbs each.

Monday 9th March 1903

I wrote to Mr Thurston offering on behalf of my brother his 'Retired Sepoy' which was much admired in the Exhibition as a present to the Art Gallery, now being formed by the Madras Fine Arts Society. The model for this picture was a pensioned Mahratta Sepoy at present employed as a gate keeper at the 'Pattin's Gardens'; where we had put up during our stay in Madras. The painting was done from life.

Wednesday 11th March 1903

This afternoon I paid a visit to Mr Harald S. Ferguson in his bungalow in the Public Gardens. I had a long conversation. He told me that he thinks of going home for good next year when he completes his twenty four years' service. On my way back I stepped into the New Public Library. The building is a fine one and the Secretary Ms La Bonehardin showed me round. I saw a beautiful edition of the life and works of the Great French Artist Messonierra [Meissonier].[206] I have become a subscriber and paid [the] subscription for March and April.



Friday 13th March 1903

I have written again today to Ms Hussonally [Hussainally] Abdulal of Bombay to send me a roll of canvas, 4 feet wide, not having received any reply to my first letter yet. Since posting my letter I have received the canvas this evening. We, i.e. Brother and I paid a visit to the Dewan to request him to allow Dr Lalitman who has been transferred to remain here for another 15 days.

Saturday 14th March 1903

Received from the National Bank the 2nd halves of currency notes for Rs 4475. I wonder what has become of the first halves the despatch of which was announced. Perhaps the cover has been sent to Kilimanur and may come back tomorrow or the day after. I have received interest for Rs 47.30 from Binny & Co.

Sunday 15th March 1903

My nephew Kunjunni who is gifted with good taste for music was placed under Subbarama Bhagavathan to receive his lessons. Raja who is less gifted is made his companion.

Monday 16th March 1903

Received the first halves of the currency notes from the National Bank today. The delay was due to their having gone to Kilimanur. The amount is to be utilized in clearing Brother's debts which thank God has come down from 80,000[207] to about 4 or 5 thousand. Had Brother taken care to save the money he had earned by painting he would have been one of the richest men.

Tuesday 17th March 1903

I am now reading Missconerie's [Meissonier's] Life a beautiful bound volume with illustrations. I am an admirer of his style and manner. How I wished I had seen some of his original works. His fidelity to nature, management of chiaroscuro and feeling for tone, are admirable. His life is very instructive.

Wednesday 18th March 1903

Returned to J.B. Mehta and Sons eight out of nine rings they sent for inspection. The one we have kept here is for Rs 200 which will be remitted to them by tomorrow's post. Today I commenced the portrait of the Vollur Rajah's father from a faded carte-de-visit Photo. There is a slight resemblance between father and son, but it is very difficult to produce anything like a satisfactory portrait from a faded old photo. The photo of the present Zamindar is good.

Thursday 19th March 1903

What a curious and long name he has—Raja Shri Bommadivaru Bhashyakarulu Naidu Bahadur—[it] is not a name that can be used in ordinary conversation. We have made a study of his head while at Madras and it is a good likeness. He is of a very dark complexion, has not either beard or moustache though he is a man of middle age. He has the voice and manners of a woman.

Friday 20th March 1903

The other portrait we have in hand are the busts of the late Ms Chintsal Rao, C.I.E. and Ms N. Subba Rao of Rajamundry. The Vollur Zamindar and his father are both half-lengths. Brother has entrusted the major part of the portrait work to me, because he finds it difficult and distasteful to paint portraits, more so when they are from photographs.

Saturday 21st March 1903

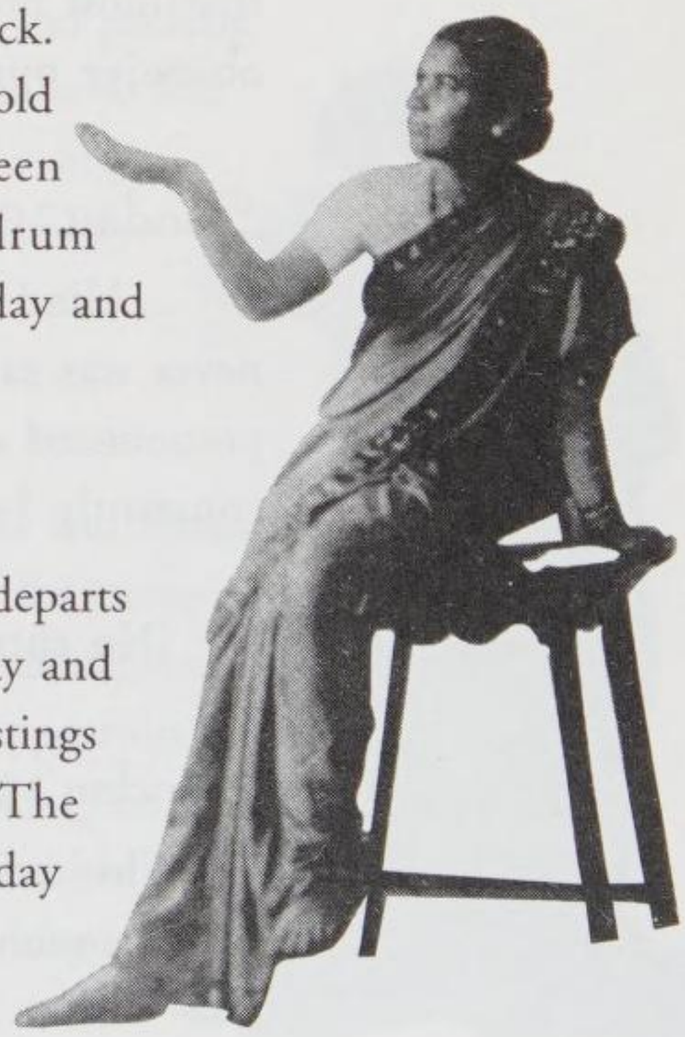
I gave the Dewan's letter on the subject of our rights to the entire produce of the Kilimanur Adhikaram to Ms D'Cruz to be photographed, I went next to the library and spent about 2 hours there. I brought with me a copy of 'Balzac's Pire Goriot' and the coronation number of the London News.

Sunday 22nd March 1903

Left Trivandrum for Kilimanur at about 10.30 p.m. We did not tell our sick cousin that we were going home, since we expected to return soon.

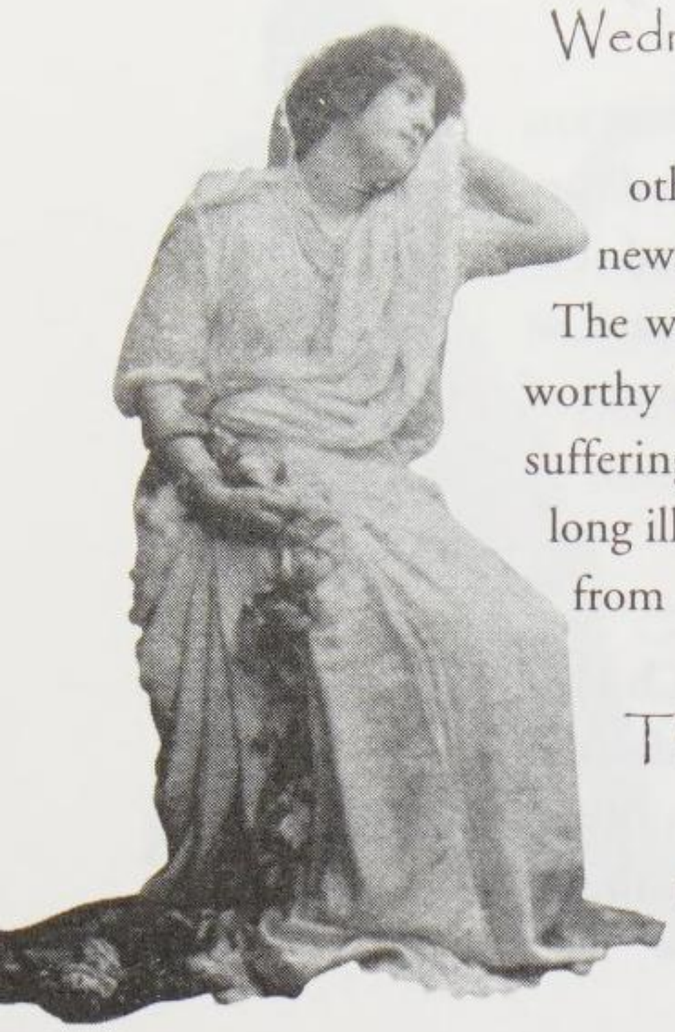
Monday 23rd March 1903

We reached Attingal this morning at about 8 and after we had taken coffee started for Kilimanur where we arrived at 11 o'clock. All our relations asked us about Cousin's state of health and we told them that he was much in the same condition as he has been for some days past. The heat here is more than at Trivandrum where there is sometimes the sea-breeze. The cuckoo is heard day and night...



Tuesday 24th March 1903

...This bird never fails to visit our Village in this season. It departs with the commencement of the rainy season. Today is my birthday and I complete my forty third year. Being Thiruonam there were feastings in several Sudra houses including that of my servant Kesavan. The number of Sudra servants to be fed in connection with my birth day is therefore less than usual. I cannot realize that I am so old as forty three.



Wednesday 25th March 1903

Early this morning a niece of ours gave birth to a son and thus an other member is added to our already large family. At about 8 the awful news was brought that my cousin the Kochu Koil Thampuran is no more. The whole family is plunged in the deepest sorrow for he was in every way a worthy head of our house. Although we had known that the disease he was suffering from was an incurable one and he had suffered terribly during his long illness, still we can not reconcile so easily to the thought of being separated from him for ever…

Thursday 26th March 1903

…He had been the head of our family only for six short years and throughout his management he showed a spirit of conciliation, justice and strict impartiality. He was born in the month of Medom 1018 and therefore would have celebrated his 60th year next Medom had God spared him. He received his early education which was in Sanskrit from our uncles who were distinguished in one Art or the other…

Friday 27th March and Saturday 28th March 1903

…He was the eldest son of our aunt Kavamma and his brother Ithammar is the only issue now left. The latter who is now [+++] years old is a very intelligent and clever gentleman well versed in Sanskrit. He is only a little careless about his own affairs so that he looks as if he is in perpetual difficulties. Now to return to the subject of this sketch Raja Raja Varma or as he was generally called 'Kunjunni' who was the eldest of my cousins had acquired a fair knowledge of Sanskrit before he was invested with the holy thread. Some time after this ceremony he had the misfortune to be taken possession of by that most obstinate and troublesome devil commonly known as [demon of obsessive purity]…[208]

Sunday 29th March 1903

…blind superstition. He soon became a slave to this evil propensity. He never was satisfied with the 'Mantrama' he repeated, he imagined that he pronounced every word incorrectly. He was never out of the water,[209] he was constantly [+++].

[No entry between 29th March and 13th April]

Monday 13th April 1903

This is our 'Vishu' or New Year's day. The official new year begins with the month Chingom and nobody notices it much. I and my brother spent last Vishu in Hyderabad. Early this morning we were led like so

many blind men and women to our domestic sanctuary[210] to open our eyes first on the bright, shining images, flowers and fruits. The day is kept as a holiday.

Sunday 14th April 1903

A new block of building with eleven apartments for ladies has been commenced. It extends north and south and when finished will present a decent appearance. The old building in front of it hitherto occupied by the ladies has been pulled down and its material will be used for the new one where practicable. The foundation was laid nearly two years ago.

Wednesday 15th April 1903

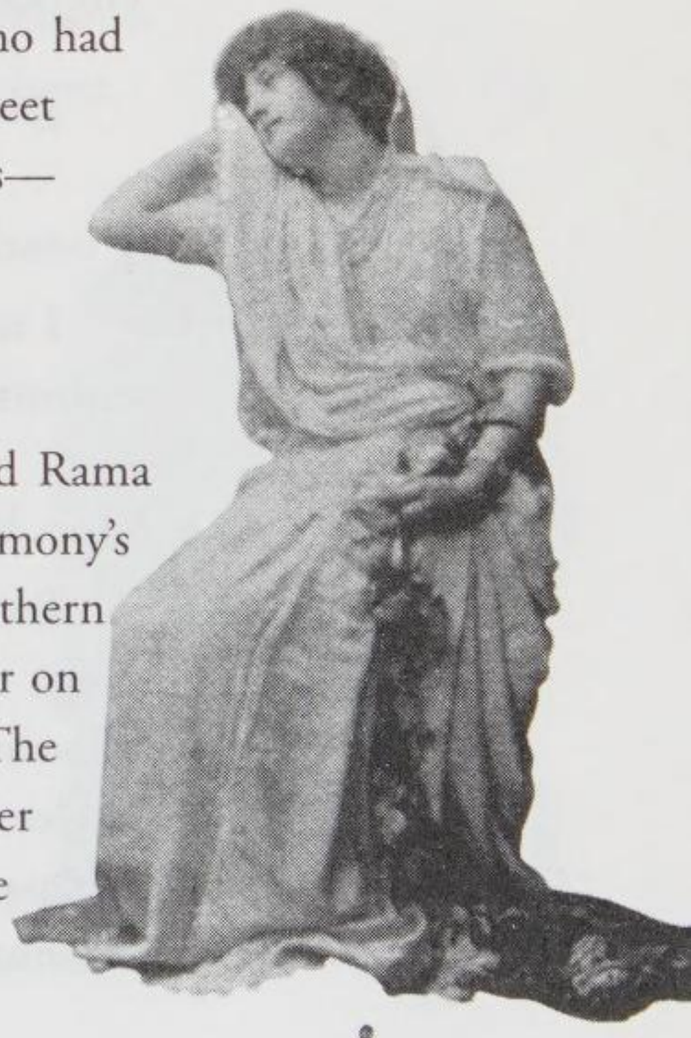
I left Kilimanur for town [Trivandrum] this evening at 5, with the object of paying a visit to H.H. The Maharaja and of being present at the meeting of the School of Arts Committee. I did not take leave of every one of the senior members of the family as usual since my absence will be but a short one. I took [a] boat at Puvampara, where—though there is scarcity of water—boats are available. My boat was put out at about 7.30 p.m.

Thursday 16th April 1903

When I reached Trivandrum landing place it was broad day-light and so I walked to the beach having sent for a carriage. I enjoyed my walk by the seashore very much in the cool of the morning. The carriage came and drove to the Fort. After breakfast I paid a visit to the Maharaja, to the young Ranis and the Valiya Koil Thampuran. I slept at my wife's house. The night was very warm and my sleep was restless.

Friday 17th April 1903

I was busy this morning with my two brothers in examining and packing the things belonging to our late cousin the Kochu Koil Thampuran who had lived in the small upper story in the Sreepadam Palace facing the street leading to the Padmathirtham Tank. There are a lot of things, books—useful and otherwise.



Saturday 18th April and Sunday 19th April 1903

This evening my two brothers, my nephews K. Kerala Varma and Rama Varma went to the theatre to see the performance of a play by P. Balamony's troupe. This talented woman has acquired a wide reputation in Southern India as an actress. Great credit is due to her as she is the first to appear on the boards as a professional actress and have a company of her own. The best part of the performance was her own acting and that of another woman who is said to be a Vaishnava[211] by sect. There was a large audience.

Monday 20th April 1903

Balamony came to see my brother and requested him to paint her portrait for her. He made some remarks about her acting and pointed out to her in what respects there was room for improvement. She received the advice with cheerfulness. We told her that we could not paint her portrait without the sanction of the Maharaja. She has promised to get it, for the Maharaja is much pleased with her.

Tuesday 21st April 1903

There is no talk in Trivandrum now except that of Balamony and her troupe. She attracts full houses. For my own part I don't think much of her if I may judge from what I saw the other day. Her movements and expressions are a little too forced and unnatural. I liked the Vaishnava woman better.

Wednesday 22nd April 1903

My Brother Ravi Varma and myself left today for Kilimanur; my brother Goda Varma having left for Mavelikara. There is a great rush of people for boats at the landing place. All the boats have been pressed for service in connection with the approaching wedding of the nieces of Sankaran Tampi, the prime favourite of the Maharaja. Immense quantity [*sic*] of furniture and other things are being daily sent out to Chavara his native place. With great difficulty we got boats for our use.

Thursday 23rd April 1903

When I was in Baroda 10 years ago there were two dance-girls who were named Gori and Khandimati who were brought from Tanjore by the King. I saw them dancing to the tune of the Varna which begins with the line 'Mana Viraykana Radha' in Shankara Bharanam raga in Aditala.[212]

[No entry between 23rd April and 5th May 1903]

Tuesday 5th May 1903

I wrote a letter to Raja Bhagvan Das on behalf of Brother regarding the settlement of the account in connection of the Nizam's portrait.

Monday 11th May 1903

Brother, myself and Cousin K.R.R. went on an inspection trip to the forests which lie on the north-eastern boundary of Kilimanur. We had a large following. We breakfasted at the house of the Arur Potty and started for the jungles at about 2 p.m. We had a long and trying walk. We had our coffee and Vattapara in the midst of the jungle. At present most of the trees are young and not fit for house building. In about 20 or 30 years they will—if well

preserved—turn full grown timber. The dispute between Government and ourselves regarding our rights to the exclusive possession of all the forest produce (including royal trees such as teak etc.) having been settled by the present Dewan in our favour and the Government Forest Department having been prohibited from interfering with the trees in Kilimanur. It is now found necessary to make arrangements for the preservation of our forest. It is with this view that we visited portions of our forests which lie further from us. I think that some of the well wooded portions should be reserved for the greater safety of the trees. There is a large area of forest tract in the Adhikaram and it is well worth looking for.

Friday 15th May 1903

We sent two copies of the photographs of the picture of 'Aja's Lament' or the 'Fatal Garland' to Ms Chatterji of Allahabad for publication in his journal 'The Prabasi'.[213]

[No entry till 24th May 1903]

Sunday 24th May 1903

We started early this morning for Kattakal our estate in 'Vempayam' on our way to Trivandrum. In the evening we walked through the fields and gardens inspecting the condition of the corn and the coconut trees.

Monday 25th May 1903

We took another walk this morning after coffee to those parts of our estate which we could not visit last evening. There is not a suitable building here for us to stay. At present we stay at the farm house which is a dismal place. We were looking for a site for a bungalow to be built but could not decide any. We left Kuttakal at 3 p.m. for town which is only 16 miles distant. We were three in number [:] my eldest brother, my cousin K.R.R. and myself besides servants.

Tuesday 26th May 1903

It was past 9 last night when we reached Trivandrum, but our supper was kept in readiness. We paid our respects to H.H. the Maharaja at 2 p.m. Yesterday while travelling in our carriage Brother told me and my cousin that he has made a present of the Kattakal estate to me in consideration of the work I have done for him for the past fifteen years. In fact all his earnings are the result of our joint work.

Wednesday 27th May 1903

We paid visits to the Valiya Koil Thampuran and the young Ranis. My brother and the Ranis' mother were with them. The former of whom

his royal grand children are extremely fond was going to narrate to them a play. [+++] At night I and my cousin went to the Jubilee Hall to see a dramatic performance by Balamony and Company. I did not find the performance very interesting. There were a large number of native ladies present to witness the play. I was more pleased with the first performance I saw a month ago.

Thursday 28th May 1903

The estate of Kattakal which has been granted to me by my brother was purchased in [+++] from [+++] for a sum of Rs [+++]. It has been considerably improved since it was purchased and we have [+++] about 24 acres of waste land to it. The property is an extensive one and the principal source of revenue is coconut. It is capable of still further improvements and I think of effecting them by and by.

Sunday 31st May 1903

Brother and I went to Mr Sankarasubba Iyer's house at Karamanai in response to an invitation to attend his grand-son's ubaneyanam. He was Dewan of Travancore.

Monday 1st June 1903

This morning at 7.30 we paid a visit to the British Resident Mr G.T. MacKenzie by appointment. Our conversation was on general topics. From the Residency we drove to the Public Library and spent some time looking at journals and magazines. We returned home at 9. Tonight at 8 there was a short shower. There are yet no strong signs of the monsoon and the heat is intense during the days.

[No entry till 8th June]

Monday 8th June 1903

Wrote a letter to Permanan Das Bhagavan Das of Hyderabad in reply to his of the 15th May regarding the disposal of the Nizam's portrait.[214] He denies ever having written to us that he would purchase it while we have his letters and a telegram to that effect. The majority of the Hyderabad nobles and officials are notorious for their dishonesty, want of truthfulness and immoral character.

Tuesday 9th June 1903

Received a letter from Mr Frig Schluker[215] [Fritz Schleicher] to day that he would pay us the balance of Rs 10,000 about the end of September or the 1st of October. I hope he will not postpone payment further. We having written to him agreeing to his arrangement and reminding him that he should pay the amount with interest at 6 percent from January last.

Thursday 11th June 1903

This morning we paid a visit to the Dewan to speak to him about publishing a notice in the Government Gazetter regarding the reservation of the Kilimanur forest. On our way to the 'Bhakthivilasam' the Dewan's quarter we were overtaken by a heavy downpour of rain and at Thampanur the horse—frightened at some thing—took to flight notwithstanding the best effort of the coachman to stop him. Our lives were in imminent danger, but the horse came to a dead stop at the ascent to the Cotton Hill and we were saved.

Friday 12th June 1903

Our nephew Ithamma came about noon with Govinda Pillai from Kilimanur to tell us that the new building for ladies has been seriously damaged by the heavy rains we have been having. It seems that beams and rafters and all the woodwork of the room came down last night with a crash as though by an earthquake. Ithamma left at once deeply grieved to see the catastrophe.

Saturday 13th June 1903

I and K.R.R my cousin called on the Dewan early this morning but as he had one or two European visitors we had to wait for more than half an hour, but we spent this time in conversing with Mr Thiraviyam Pillay, the Unzet Superintendent. The Dewan told us that he had sent to the Press the notice regarding the reserving of our forests.

Sunday 14th June 1903

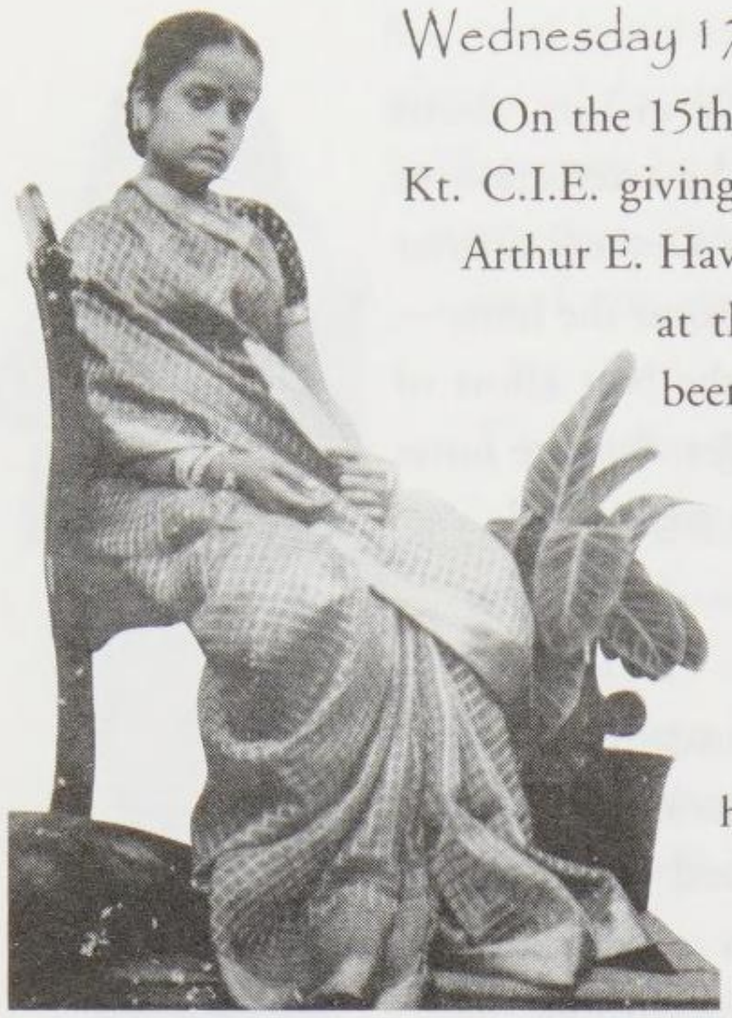
Last evening our nephews returned from Kilimanur to begin their schools after vacation. This morning we had bright sunshine for some hours. This change is welcome.

Monday 15th June 1903

This evening at 5.30 a certain Theosophist by name Narayan Swami Aiyyar gave us [a] lecture [+++] Hinduism on modern scientific principles. He spoke fluently and seemed to know a great deal on the subject he was discoursing. He means to give a series of lectures on Hinduism and we have placed our Town High School building at his disposal. Messers Nagamiah, Mahadeva Iyer and a few officials were present at this evening's inaugural lectures.

Tuesday 16th June 1903

This morning I visited first the school of Arts and then the Public Library. I returned the Art Journal volume and the life of W. Turner, the great English landscape painter, and brought with me the Hindu manual, a new book on the language by F. Pincott, the same orientalist who had written a preface to the translation of Sakuntala in Hindi by Raja Lachman Singh. I am now reading this translation.



Wednesday 17th June 1903

On the 15th instant a letter was received from Sir S. Ramaswami Mudaliar Kt. C.I.E. giving the following extract from a letter addressed to him by Sir Arthur E. Havelock, at present Governor of Tasmania, expressing his pleasure at the news of the successful manner in which his portrait had been executed by us for the Banqueting Hall at Madras. He writes:

> From His Excellency Lord Ampthill and from others who have seen the portrait, I have received the assurance that the artist Ravi Varma Coiltampuran, has executed the difficult task entrusted to him with great skill and success. I saw some of the Artist's works when I visited Trivandrum in 1897 and again in one or more of the Art Exhibitions held in Madras. I was much impressed by the talent possessed by him. I should be greatly obliged to you, if you would express to him my greateful acknowledgements, should you have an opportunity of doing so.

[*See also* Diary 22 July 1903]

Friday 19th June 1903

This evening, Brother, myself and cousin K.R.R.V. paid a visit to Mr Sankarasubbah Iyer, the late Dewan who wants his portrait to be painted by us. We had a long conversation on various subjects. Regarding the appointment of Kerala Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran[216] as the guardian of the young princesses he does not take a favourable view. He seemed to think that a man of greater moral calibre was required for the place.

Saturday 20th June 1903

Attended the School of Arts meeting this morning. One case containing a half length portrait of King Edward and Queen, one of the Zamindar of Vollur and two others of the Zamindar's father and the Hon'ble N. Subba Rao were despatched today by transit cart for Tinnevelly to be sent to Cocanada by Rail. The transit charges were Rs 7. This morning when I visited the Library I paid Rs 2 subscriptions till the end of Karkudakam.

Sunday 21st June 1903

I commenced Ms Sankarasubbar Iyer's portrait—a half length—and also one of Ms Nagamiah's old mother. Speaking of Nagamiah reminds me of the case related to Omanpallikara, which he has lately decided. The Namboodri who owns the tract called Omenpallikara in Kilimanur claimed that the Desam[217] was free from rent of all kinds, but we contended that we have the right to levy 1/8 Kadama on such of the lands as have been alienated. We have the case decided in our favour by High Court and Mr Nagamiah has now decided that a revenue settlement should be conducted and tax levied on lands that have been alienated.

Thursday 23rd June 1903

Wrote a letter to Sir Arthur Havelock to thank him for the kind terms in which he has referred to Brother in his letter to Sir S. Ramaswami Mudaliyar; also sent him a copy of Brother's biographical sketch published at the Indian Press, Allahabad, for his acceptance.[218] Sir Arthur is now the Governor of Tasmania in Australia. As the Governor of Madras he was very popular.

Wednesday 24th June 1903

I called on H.H. The Maharaja this noon to show him Sir Arthur Havelock's letter as desired by Sir S. Ramaswamy. Mr K.P. Sankara Menon the newly appointed Dewan Peshkar was waiting for an audience. But the Maharaja owing to a slight indisposition had fallen into a light slumber. When he awoke I was called in first and after fifteen minutes' conversation during which His Highness read the letter I left the palace. Mr Sankara Menon's father Sankarni Menon was Peshkar and was the author of a History of Travancore.[219]

[No entry between 24th June to 30th June 1903]

Tuesday 30th June 1903

A contract was this day signed by Kuriajan[?] Jacob Kottanar of Tiruvella, promising to pay me and my cousin K. Raja Raja Varma Rs 10,000 out of the Rs 25,000 which the heirs of the late Kerala Varma Raja of Nedumpurathee Koikal have bound themselves to pay to him for the pecuniary help which he had agreed to give them in order to establish their claims to the property of the deceased in British Malabar in a court of Law. Their rival claimants are the Rajas of Mariyapalli. As the Kottanar is unable to further help them, my brother has agreed to undertake it for the above consideration.[220]

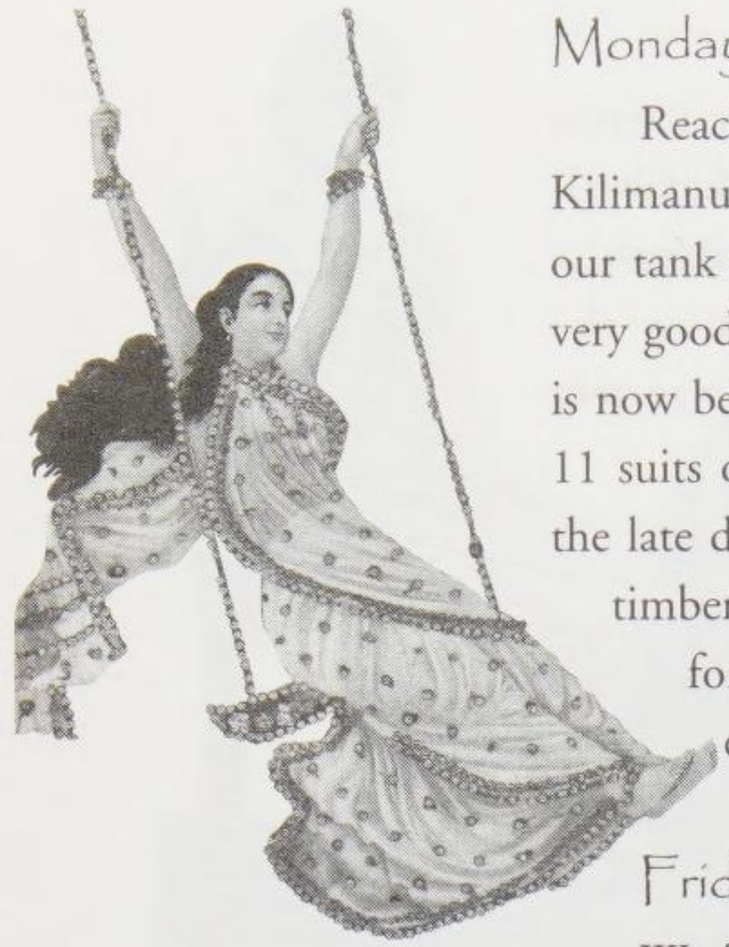
[No entry between 30th June and 4th July]

Saturday 4th July 1903

This morning I visited the School of Arts with my nephew Kerala Varma, Ravi Varma and Kunjunni whom I have arranged to be taken to the drawing class. In the evening we drove to Mr Nagamiah's bungalow and made a sketch of his old mother, who is 85 years of age. We returned home at about 6.30.

Sunday 5th July 1903

This morning we paid a visit to Dr Poonen to consult him about the disease (Hernia) from which my brother has been suffering for a month and a half past. We leave to night for Kilimanur.



Monday 6th July 1903

Reached Attingul [Attingal] early in the morning and after coffee left for Kilimanur where we arrived at about 11 o'clock. The heavy rains have filled our tank to the brim and as it had been drained two months ago, the water is very good. In the afternoon visited the new building to which the front veranda is now being built. The roof which had collapsed has been put right. There are 11 suits of rooms and the building extends north and south facing east. After the late disaster, H.H. The Maharaja has been pleased to order 50 Khandies of timber to be given [to] us. This is quite sufficient for our wants. Our own forest which supplied most of the timber does not contain trees large enough for planks for ceiling and doors.

Friday 10th July 1903

We [Brother, myself and cousin K.R.R.] paid a visit this afternoon to the Dadattumalla about three miles to the north-east where pepper plantation has been lately commenced under my brother's orders. A very extensive area of the forest has been cleared of the undergrowth of grass and bushes and vines planted at the foot of almost every tree. At about 6 it began to rain and we returned home.

Saturday 11th July 1903

Not far from the pepper plantation and about a mile to the east of the public road from the place called Attur Chettram is our ancestral estate of Kuravankuzhydoddy which we think of visiting before long. Near this estate is a ruined temple of Vishnu called Wyattunkara. Its circular base constructed of sculptured granite stone would show that it was a temple of great importance at one time. It is said that the Raja of Ambalapulay when he was an independent chief had owned this temple and the land adjacent to it. There is still a place called 'Chempakachery' near the temple where the Namboodri chieftain had his house some remains of which the people in the neighbourhood say are still to be discovered. An other evidence of the Ampalapuza Raja's ownership and connection with this temple is to be found in the custom extant to this very day of asking by the Tandri of the Ampalapuzha temple before the Kadiyettu[221] in that temple—if the Kadiyettu of Attur is over and on being replied in the affirmative the Kadiyettu is performed. At what time the Ampalapuzha Raja lost his claims to the estate and temple here is unknown. One account says that the Rajas of Kunnumel who were the Lords of Kilimanur before they were subjugated by the Kings of Travancore gave the Ambalapuza chief such trouble that he was obliged to leave his possessions here for ever and betake to his own state.

[Here ends the transcription of the first diary of C. Raja Raja Varma. The copy of the second part of the diary was—like the first part—transcribed into a calendar diary by the same hand, it begins with an entry for Wednesday, 15th July, 1903, and ends with the entry of Friday, 1st January, 1904.]

Wednesday 15th July 1903

Received information this morning that [some] burglars entered the farmhouse at 'Kattakal' and attempted to steal corn from the granary. One of the thieves has been caught and our farmer has written to ask what should be done with him. Word has been sent to hand him over to the police and charge him. The thief is well known to us and is a frequent visitor to our estate.

Saturday 18th July 1903

A money order for Rs 7–8 was sent this day to the manager of the Madras Standard being the subscription to the paper from January to the end of June. We began to take this paper at the desire of its late editor Mr G. Parameswar Pillay[222] whose sad death took place lately at Quilon.

Monday 20th July 1903

Received a letter from our agent at Mysore that the proposal to adorn the Maharaja's new palace with a set of our paintings has been favourably received by the engineer in charge of the work. He wants to know what it would cost for us to pay a visit to Mysore to see the building before deciding upon the subject of the pictures and our terms in executing them.

Tuesday 21st July 1903

I commenced my usual oil treatment this morning. I find it very tedious to pass my time doing nothing. I have long been accustomed to devote every hour of mine in doing something useful. I have now to lie down quiet. It is a pity that I have here no one to read to me some book I am interested in.

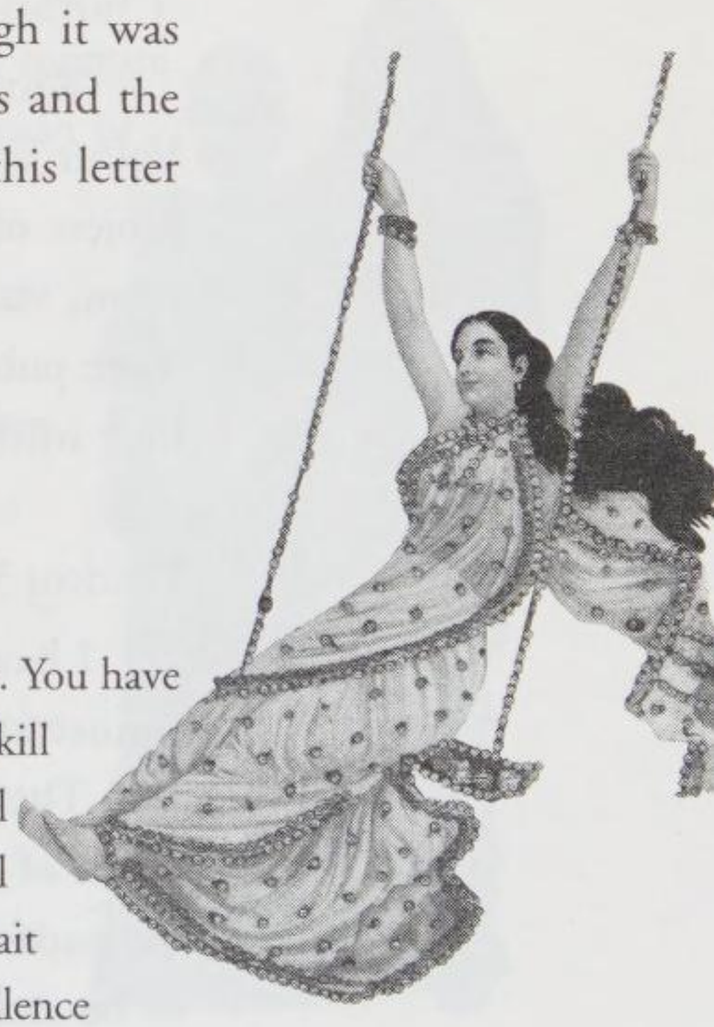
Wednesday 22nd July 1903

Sir Arthur Havelock's letter to brother is transcribed here though it was received on the 11th August. As no entries had been made under this and the six following dates I have thought of filling the blank spaces with this letter which is a valuable testimonial to be preserved.[223]

'Government House Hobart'
Tasmania
17th July 1903

Dear Mr Ravi Varma,

It has given me great pleasure to receive your letter of the 22nd June. You have given me an opportunity of repeating the admiration I feel for the artistic skill and talent shown by yourself and your brother in the execution of the memorial portrait of myself, which has been honoured by a place in the Banqueting Hall at Madras. His Excellency the Governor and others who have seen the portrait all join in testifying to the merits of the portrait as a work of art and to the excellence



of the likeness to the original. From Photographs, which Vasudeva Raja, with whom I believe you are acquainted has sent me—we are all assured that the portrait is a pleasing and faithful reproduction of me. That you should have been able to archive so much success on the slender materials at your disposal is gratifying to myself as I know it is to you, and now I beg you to accept my warm thanks, for the beautiful memento of yourself and of your work as an artist, which you have been so kind as to present me. I had seen some of your paintings at Trivandrum and the Art Exhibitions in Madras, but until I had read the sketch of your life, I had no idea of the extent of your work as a painter. The illustrations of the book are perfectly lovely and as reproduction that can be trusted as accurate of Indian types, dress and life and as exponents of Indian classics and romance are of special value. I shall always treasure the volume, not only for its beauty and interest, but also as a token of the kindness and goodwill of its author.

I remain, Dear Mr Ravi Varma

Yours sincerely
[sd] H.E. Havelock

Wednesday 24th July 1903

This morning Kesava Pillai of Gapiela[?] brought me my pattom Money for the second Malabar [*sic*] [Malayalam] half year ending with Karkadagam [Karkatakam] amounting to Rs 45-15. This is the last day of my oil-treatment. From tomorrow for nine days I have [term in Malayali]. I find the time very irksome. I am now engaged in writing an account of the art of painting in Travancore for Mr Nagamaiah's Travancore Manual.[224] It is difficult to get reliable information on the early state of art in this country.

Thursday 30th July 1903

Wrote two letters under yesterday's date addressed to the Raja of South Vollur and the other to the Hon'ble Mr Subbu Rao of Rajamandri on the subject of remitting of the balances of the prices of the paintings executed for them, viz. the portraits of the Raja and his father, and the King Emperor for some public body at Cocanada. I forgot to include the price of Mr Subba Rao's bust in the bill sent to the Raja.

Friday 31st July 1903

I have discovered certain old records containing particulars of certain events connected with our family. Our late uncle Ithammar Visakham Thirunal Valiya Koil Thampuran[225] has left a piece of paper containing the names and dates of births of certain of our ancestors. I came upon them when examining a heap of old papers which had been preserved by our uncle but which had been allowed to be eaten by worms.

Thursday 1st August 1903

While examining the old records and papers which our late uncle Ithammar or Vishakam Tirunal Valiya Koil Thampuran had preserved I came upon certain old scraps of paper containing some account of our ancestry and the names of some of the prominent persons in it. From those accounts I am trying to write a connected[?] [concise] history of our family from the earliest times and to prepare a genealogical tree.

Monday 3rd August 1903

What tempted me to examine the old papers was Nagamaiah's [Nagam Aiya] request to supply him with some information's [*sic*] of the Kilimanur house of nobility for insertion in the manual of Travancore he is now engaged in writing. Had I not examined the records now every trace of authentic information would have perished with the decaying papers.

Tuesday 4th August 1903

I trust that in future every effort will be made to preserve the account I have prepared and to follow it up without break. I have got one written in Malayalam and an other in English. I have mentioned only such of our uncles as have either been the heads of the family or were connected by marriage with the royal family and such of our grand mothers as have contributed to the perpetuation of the line. The births and deaths of some of the older generation cannot be found. We are indebted to that sagacious noble hearted and talented uncle Ithammar who died in Malayalam year 1872[?] having brought our family to a state of prosperity it had not known before. His name deserves to be remembered forever with the founders of our home in Travancore.

Saturday 8th August 1903

I got from Ms R. MacLure, Pharmacists, Madras, two bottles of my mixture and one bottle of Rubinat Water prescribed for me by Major Robertson of the Government Hospital. I paid Rs 5-10.

Sunday 9th August 1903

I began to take the mixture this morning, my oil treatment having been over by yesterday.

Monday 10th August 1903

This morning at 7.30 I planted a little to the south-east of the new Proverthy Cutcherry of this athikaram[?] [Kilimanur] near our ancient burning ground saplings of the Banyan tree as also a [Pipal tree] both the plants not even a span high. These are to mark the year in which my cousin Raja Raja Varma, the husband of the late Junior

Rani of Travancore died and in which my elder brother Ravi Varma, the renowned artist became the head of the family, viz 1903—1028 Malabar year.

Thursday 11th August 1903

I have often wondered on looking at the two gigantic Banyan trees, the one growing in front of our palace and the other before the temple of Vetta Karuman who planted them and at what time. Had they thought of recording the same, how much of my present disappointment and ignorance could have been avoided.

Wednesday 12th August 1903

Received a letter by yesterday's post from Sir Arthur Havelock, now Governor of Tasmania acknowledging our letter and the illustrated biographical sketch of my brother and expressing his pleasure at our success in painting a truthful likeness of His Excellency for the Madras Government House.[226]

Last night there died a blind girl three years old in our family. We all feel thankful to God for having removed the poor thing from this earth for if she had lived to womanhood her life would have been very miserable.

Friday 14th August 1903

Sent a copy of Brother's biography to the Raja of South Vollur and wrote to him reminding him of the omission of Rs 200 from the bill of Rs 700 already sent.

Saturday 15th August 1903

Received a letter from Ms P. Krishna Rao B.A. & B.L. Deputy Collector now at Kollegal, Coimbatoore District regarding the despatch of his father's portrait.

Sunday 16th August 1903

Wrote to the private secretary to the Thakore Sahib of Gondal that we shall execute the portrait for Rs 1500 if in dress and for Rs 2000 if in Durbar Dress. The Railway from Bombay to Gondal and back should also be paid.

Monday 17th August 1903

Wrote to Mr N. Subba Rao, Rajahmundry [Rajamandri] requesting him to arrange for the remittance of the price of the King Emperor's portrait, executed for the Cocanadu Town Hall, and also to the Travancore Sirkar Agent, Tinnevelly, asking him if he has despatched the case of paintings addressed to the Raja of Kurupam.

Tuesday 18th August 1903

Received a copy of the Descriptive list of Pictures in the Government House, Madras, prepared by Lieut. Col. H.D. Love R.E. as a gift from His Excellency Lord Ampthill, Governor of Madras. A letter to thank His Excellency has been written but will be posted tomorrow as it is too late today.

Friday 21st August 1903

Registered letter sent to Sidda Lingappa of Mysore. The Rev. Mr Osborne and Mrs Osborne who have their mission house at Attingale paid us a visit this morning at about 9.30. We received them in our studio. They were pleased with [the] appearance of the palace as seen from the arched gateway in the front as also with the studio room. We gave them refreshments such as fruits, biscuit[s] and tea. They were next introduced to the ladies of our household who were much pleased.

Saturday 22nd August 1903

Mrs Bassy Osborne on her return to Attingale sent for our children some beautiful dolls and toys and cards with coloured pictures to the younger ladies and a silk handkerchief which has been once used by Mrs Osborne's mother, as a present to the Grand Mother of the young Senior Rani on her father's side. A strange present indeed.

Sunday 23rd August 1903

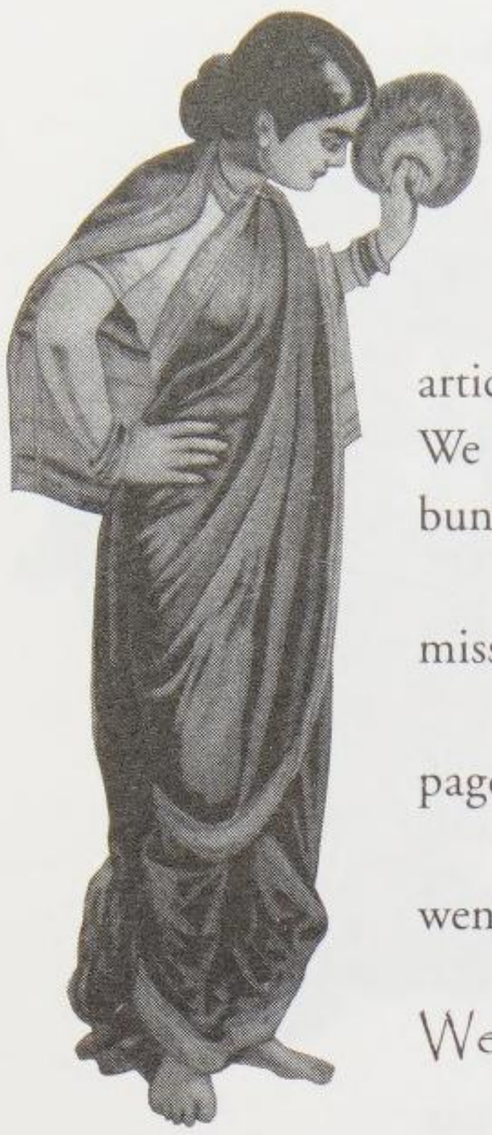
Yesterday a registered letter was sent to Pararmanand Das Bhagavan Das of Hyderabad to send us back the portrait of the Nizam now in their possession.

Monday 24th August 1903

We went this morning to our ancestral estate called Vaiyattum Karu [term given in Malayalam]. Our party consisted of my eldest brother the Valiya Koil Thampuran, my cousin K.R.R, myself, the nephews and two Namboodris besides twenty or twenty-five followers who were attracted by the hope of getting a hearty meal. We took breakfast at the old Attur Temple. Of the ancient structure now only the base remains which is neatly and artistically worked in granite stone. After inspecting the estates returned in the evening.

Tuesday 25th August 1903

A Copy of the Census Report of Travancore for 1901 has been received today. There are 3 Volumes of which the first treats of the people of this state of their customs and manners etc. When speaking of the Malayala Kshatriyas the author gives prominence to Koil Thampurans and describes that we—the Koil Thampurans of Kilimanur—went first to settle in



Travancore for marital alliances with the royal family. There are according to the last Census 175 houses and 8006 persons in Kilimanur.

Friday 28th August 1903

I and Ithamar went to the Kotakal estate to make a list of all the articles including domestic utensils and implements of husbandry and cattle. We first visited 'Aint[?] hill' and 'Cotton Hill' and decided to build the proposed bungalow on the latter. The…

[One page of the notebook containing the second part of the diary is missing here.]

[Tuesday 1st September 1903] [This is the undated rest of the previous page's entry.]

…where we arrived at about 7.30. Nephew Rama Varma was there. We went to sleep about 11.30. The night was windy.

Wednesday 2nd September 1903

A wet and rainy morning with a strong gale flowing from the sea. We walked round the estate not withstanding the rain, and visited the uncultivated portion to the west of the canal for concerting measures to utilize it. At about 2 p.m. the rain ceased and we embarked for Trivandrum where we arrived at about 9 in the evening. We had to wait till 11.30 to get our supper, which had to be prepared. It was midnight when I went to bed. The night was clear and the moon shone bright.

Thursday 3rd September 1903

I paid my respects to H.H. The Maharaja at about 2.30 p.m. I met at the palace Mr Raja Rama Rao, Dewan Peshkar and Mr Ponnambalani Pillai, Assistant Superintendent of Police. On my return from the palace I took coffee and next visited the Ranis. They were playing, the senior of them dyeing in tumeric water a small cloth for Onam tomorrow. Their teacher was there and he showed us some of the new books and maps got down for their use.

Friday 4th September 1903

The Onam day, the great national festival of Malabar. We had our bath early in the morning and at about 9 went to the palace where we had our breakfast and next received Onam presents from the Maharaja. We next visited the Senior Rani and got presents from her. There are ten of us here from Kilimanur including the boys attending College and High School. When we went to the palace this morning we inspected some of the old pictures there.

Saturday 5th September 1903

It is a pity that the Onam fete is not kept[?] by the people now as they used to do some years ago. During my boyhood I used to hear by day the sounds of mirth and merriment from boys engaged in different kinds of games

and by night the singing of women as they oscillated on swings. But nowadays they are becoming rarer and I am afraid in the near future may altogether cease. It is highly necessary to revise these games and swinging and other exercises during the festival.

Monday 7th September 1903

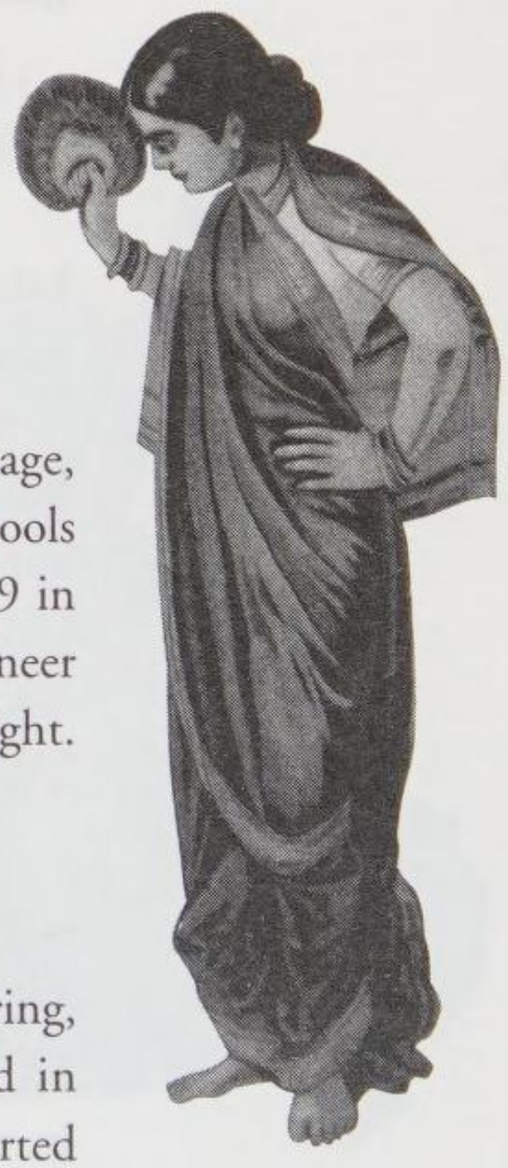
In the morning we received a visit from Messrs Ramaswamy Iyer, Inspector of Schools and Vaikunta Iyer, Engineer [in] connection with the Industrial School opened at Nagacoil mainly through[?] their exertion and invited my brother and me to pay a visit to the institution and address the leading men on the necessity of it. In the evening we both paid a visit to the Dewan and told him about our proposed visit to Nagarcoil and certain other matters connected with Kilimanur.

Tuesday 8th September 1903

This morning at 8.30 I went to the general hospital with my grand nephew Ithamar studying in the Junior B.A. class and my nephew Ravi Varma. The former suffering from bleeding in the nose and the latter from inflammation in the right ear. Poonen seemed to think both cases trivial and prescribed for both. I next went to the library and paid subscription for the current and next months Cinnam and Kanni[227] and returned home with two books one on painting and the other on colour.

Wednesday 9th September 1903

Received a reply from the palace granting me permission to visit the old paintings in the different parts of the Palace and take down notes of the dates of their execution, the names of the artists, and such historical information as I can [gather] from them. I mean to set about the work on my return from the cape and Nagarcoil. At the latter place a technical school has been started and my brother and myself have been invited by the promoters to inspect it and give our opinion on it.

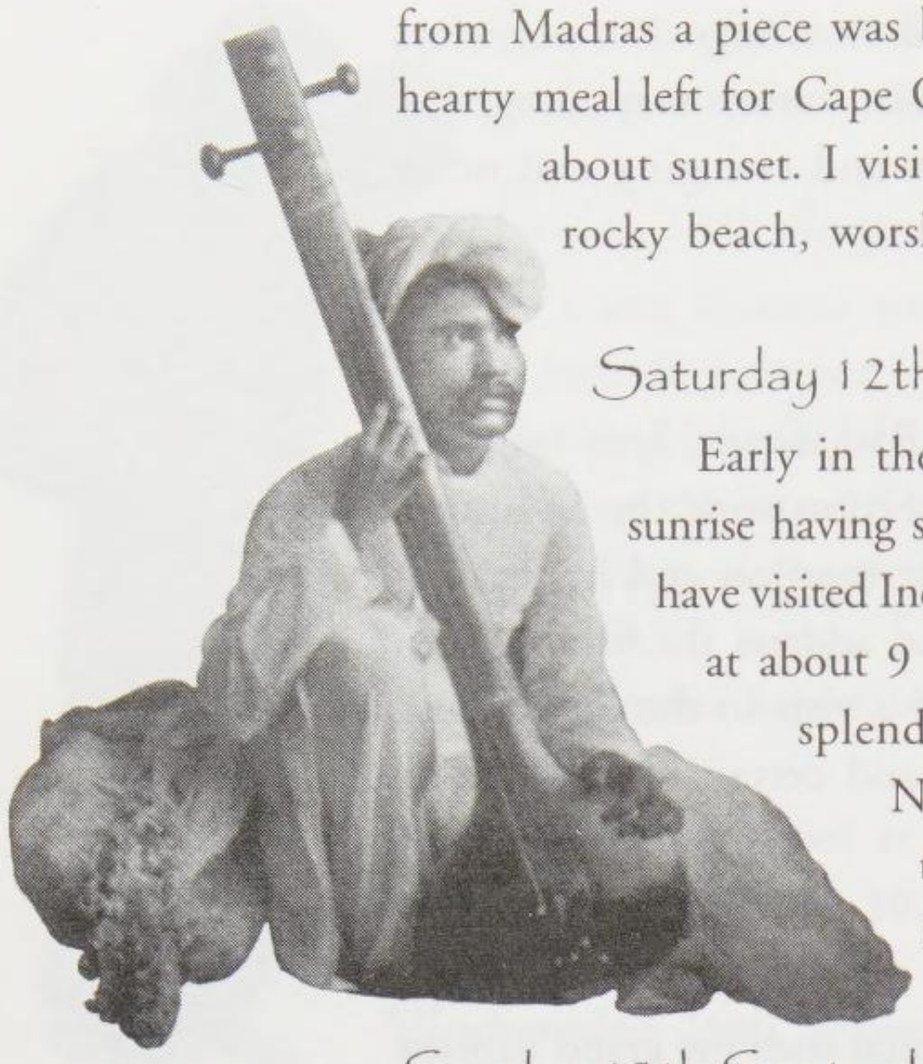


Thursday 10th September 1903

My brother and I left Trivandrum early this morning in transit carriage, took breakfast at Nayyatinkara where Mr Ramaswamy Iyer, Inspector of schools was awaiting us. We had coffee at Kattaturai, arrived at Nagarcoil at about 9 in the evening and were guests of Mr Vaikuntam Iyer the able executive Engineer of the southern division. A strong cool breeze was blowing the whole night. When we finished supper and retired it was past midnight.

Friday 11th September 1903

Early this morning we visited the Technical institute. There are Engineering, Weaving and Carpentry classes. In the weaving class a boy was engaged in making a country cloth in a hand loom, and in a fly shuttle loom imported



from Madras a piece was being woven. Carpentry classes very [+++]. After a hearty meal left for Cape Comarin [which is] about 9 miles and arrived there about sunset. I visited this place for the first time. Walked round the rocky beach, worshipped the deity in the main temple.

Saturday 12th September 1903

Early in the morning I walked to the beach and watched the sunrise having seen him [*sic*] set last evening. I may now verily say I have visited India from Himalaya to the Cape. Arrived at Suchindram at about 9 a.m. The sculpture and carving on black stone [is] splendid. The temple worth [a] close study. Arrived at Nagarcoil and attended a meeting in connection with the institute were [*sic*] Brother addressed the meeting in Malayalam Tamil on the ability of it.

Sunday 13th September 1903

Left Nagarcoil last night, [arrived at] four this morning at Nayyatinkara and reached Trivandrum again in the evening. Mr Ramaswamy Iyer who takes keen interest in the institute was our companion through out the trip.

Monday 14th September 1903

Received a Hundi for Rs 500 on a Bombay native firm from Mr Permanand Das Bhagavan Das of Hyderabad for a portrait of H.H. the Nizam and it was acknowledged in a letter written this day. We had to lower the price so much as the picture would be purchased by none out of Hyderabad. Anyhow I am glad that we have got rid of it.[228]

Tuesday 15th September 1903

Received a cheque for Rs 300 from Sir Arthur Mundrial Fund being the balance due for a portrait of the Ex-Governor. In the afternoon visited the old pictures in the different parts of the palace. None of the old pictures could[?] be made out. Of course the best pictures are those by the European painters. We were[*sic*] are pleased to hear that the Ooman Palli Kara [Omanpallikara] appeal was dismissed by the Dewan. The other party intends instituting a civil suit against us.[229]

Wednesday 16th September 1903

The late Mr Chentsal Rao's bust was despatched to Tinnevelly to be railed to Mr Bhashica Achary, Saidapet and a Letter to that effect has been written to Mr P[?] Krishna Rao, deputy Collector. The money due still for the portrait is Rs 150. The Rupees 500 received from Hyderabad, has been this day deposited in our Chettiar's banking firm on interest. We had to pay a commission Rs 3

for cashing the cheque. Wrote again a letter to the Travancore Sirkar agent at Tinnevelly about the despatch of the Portrait of Mr Chentsal Rao.

Thursday 17th September 1903

Wrote three letters today one to Mr Bhashica Achary of Saidapet about the despatch of Mr Chentsal Rao's portrait, one to Mr Schleicher intimating to him the compulsory postponement of our departure for Bombay and requesting him to remit the Rs 10,000 and its interest from January last to us before the 1st October as in that day a bargain has to be struck for the purchase of lands, and an other to Mr Shriram Pant on the same subject.

Friday 18th September 1903

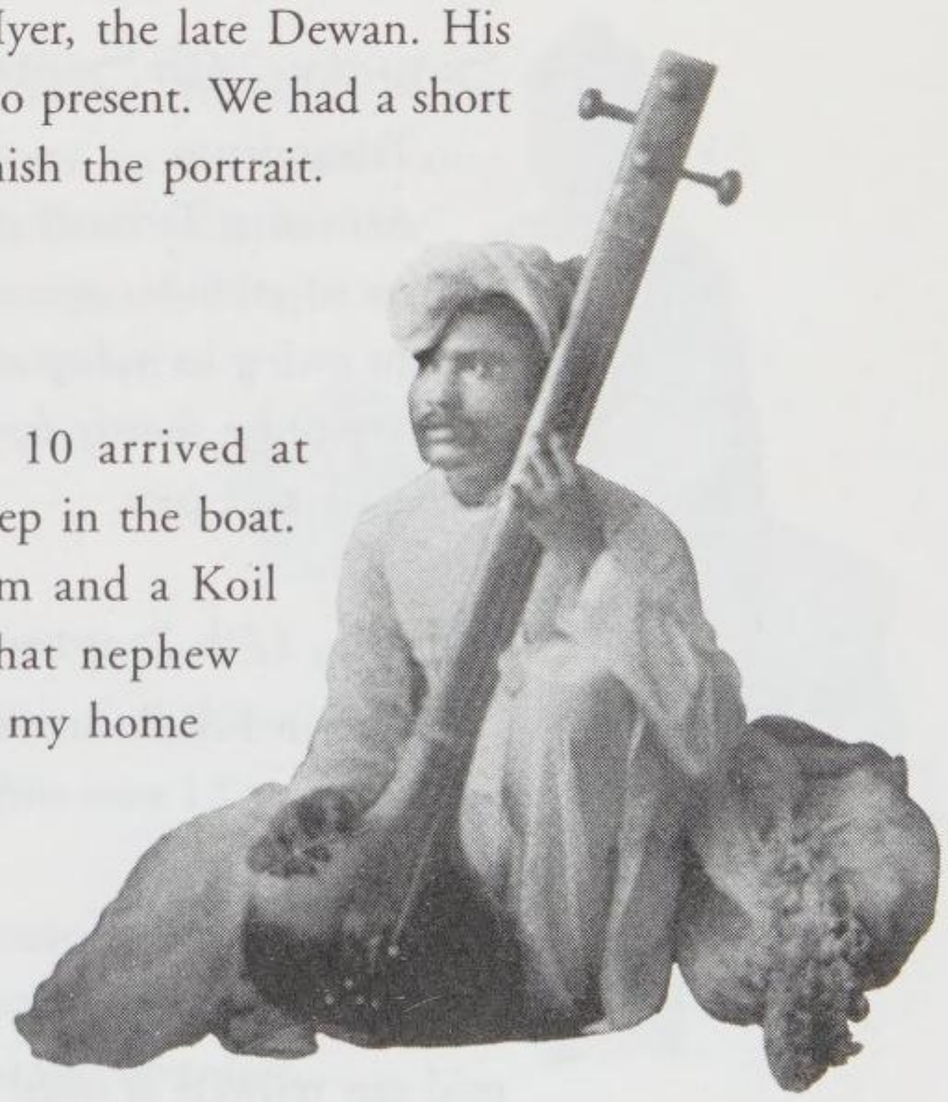
We visited Mr Nagamiah settlement, Dewan Peshkar, who, it is rumoured is in the running for the next Dewan Peshkarship. We have just finished his old mother's portrait and he expressed himself highly pleased with it. I gave him the short account I have written of our family for his state manual. He thought that it was rather too short. He wants us to give him as much information as we can relating to the Maharaja's court and manner of today.

Saturday 19th September 1903

This morning at 7.30 I attended a meeting of the School of Arts Committee at which it was resolved—among other things—to establish a cabinet meeting of department in connection with the School of Arts. I next visited the drawing class in which my nephew Ravi Varma and Raja Raja Varma or Kunjunni are receiving lessons on Saturdays. Returned home after visiting the library.

Sunday 20th September 1903

This afternoon we called on Shankara Subbar Iyer, the late Dewan. His son in law Mr Rama Iyer, Ist Class Magistrate was also present. We had a short sitting from the veteran statesman but could not finish the portrait.



Monday 21st September 1903

Kilimanur.

Having left Trivandrum last night at about 10 arrived at Kilimanur at 10 in the morning. I had very little sleep in the boat. Two of my young nephews studying in Trivandrum and a Koil Thampuran of Karama came with me. I found that nephew Ithamar was busy laying out the ground in front of my home with flower beds. The day wet and cloudy.

Tuesday 22nd September 1903

Remitted a money order for Rs 50 to Mr Hassonally Abdulally in payment of his bill. There

is now left only a balance of Rs. 2-5-6 till the month of [+++] of this year. I have been trying since my arrival here to retouch and finish the sketch of my father's head painted a few months previous to his death.

Wednesday 23rd September 1903

We went this morning to the temple of Lalu Kavu to worship the Goddess, since this is the second day of the Navrathrie-Dusserah. On my return home I remitted two money orders one for Rs 6 to the manager of the Malayale Manorama[230] and the other for Rs 4 to the Manorama at Calicut, the former being the last year's subscription to it and the latter this year's subscription.

Thursday 24th September 1903

Today is the 60th birthday of my Cousin Kochu Kunji, the eldest daughter of my aunt Unmiti[?] sister of the late Kerala Varma Kochu Koil Thampuran, the first husband of the late Junior Rani. All the members of our family except my brother and Ravi Varma and Goda Varma are present. Nephew Kerala Varma the father of the young Senior Rani arrived here this morning from Mavelikara.

Friday 25th September 1903

Nephew Kutten and I left Kilimanur this afternoon and after taking some light refreshments at Attingale took [a] boat for Trivandrum at about 8 p.m. There was a great rush of passengers from Kilimanur after the ceremony mostly Namboodris going to Trivandrum for the Maharaja's birth day. The boat hire at Poovampara and Attingale rose to 12 and 14 Fanams.

Saturday 26th September 1903

Trivandrum.

Arrived at Trivandrum at 6 in the morning and at 7 I drove to the School of Arts to attend a special meeting of the Committee. Mr Ferguson was not present owing to indisposition. Passed resolution relating to the cabinet making industry to be shortly opened in the School of Arts. Visited His Highness the Maharaja at 2 p.m.

Sunday 27th September 1903

Cousin K.R.R. arrived this morning with three of our young nephews. In the evening at 7 I went with them to the Poojapurai in the palace to hear the concert.

Monday 28th September 1903

H.H. the Maharaja's forty sixth birthday. We bathed early in the morning paid our respects as usual to His Highness at Thevarathukoikal, and breakfasted

at the palace. At night we, i.e. the nobility, were entertained by His Highness at dinner at the palace according to a custom established by the late Maharaja. We next went to the Jubilee Hall to witness a dramatic performance by the members of the National Unions Club.

Wednesday 30th September 1903

To day is Mahanavami or the 9th day of the Navratri. On this day no one does his calling but enjoys a complete rest not even writing or reading anything. Only after Vidyarambham or 're-initiation of Art' tomorrow will people resume of their work.

Thursday 1st October 1903

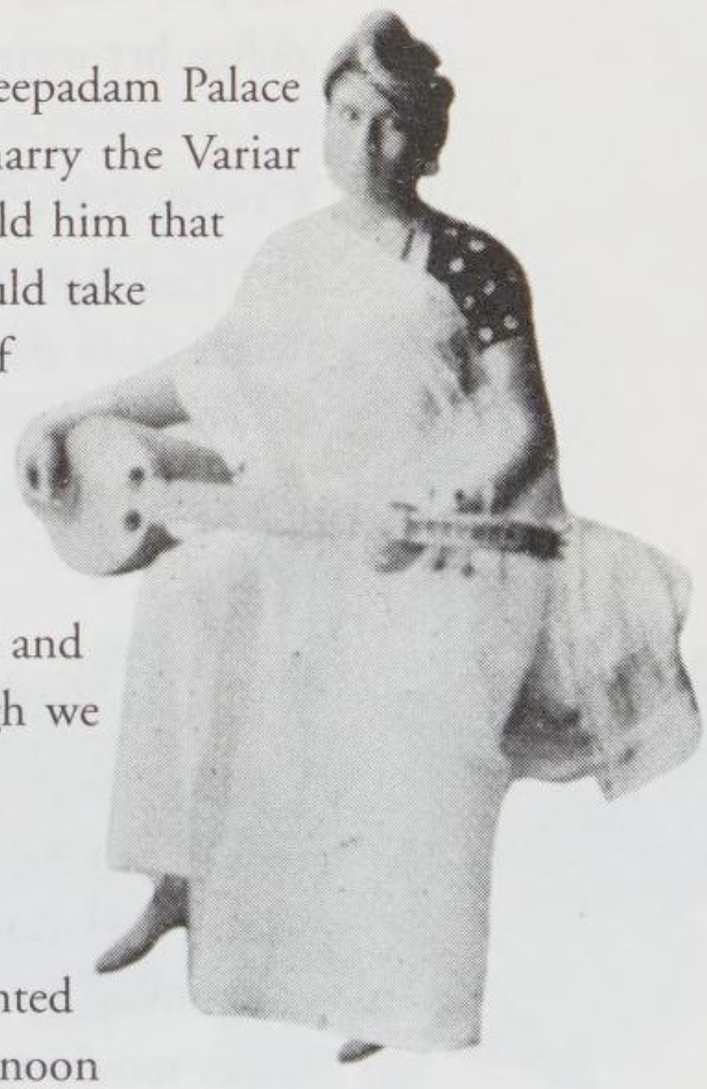
This morning we received a cheque for Rs 6000 from Mr Schleicher on the National Bank of India, Madras Branch. The cheque will be sent to the Bank to be placed on fixed deposit for one year. Wrote a letter to Mr Schleicher acknowledging receipt of the cheque and an other to A.K. Joshi & Co. about arranging a bungalow for us in Bombay, Matunga or Ghatkopar.

Friday 2nd October 1903

Sent a telegram to Mr Schleicher acknowledging receipt of the money. Kunjaru Raja of Ennacud[?] told me this afternoon that while he was returning from North Malabar he had halted at Ernakulam and became acquainted with a Variar whose daughter he said was anxious to become my wife. It appeared that Vishnu Moos of Chiruttaman[231] had told the girl that he would induce me to marry her and got a photo of hers to be shown to me, but he has never done so. His object was to deceive her.

Saturday 3rd October 1903

Ennacud Raja who met me again this afternoon at the Sreepadam Palace referred to yesterday's conversation recommending to me to marry the Variar girl who he said was both beautiful and accomplished. But I told him that I knew nothing about the matter, that I had a wife and so could take no second wife[232] without lowering my self in the estimate of people and that Moos was responsible for all the mischief.

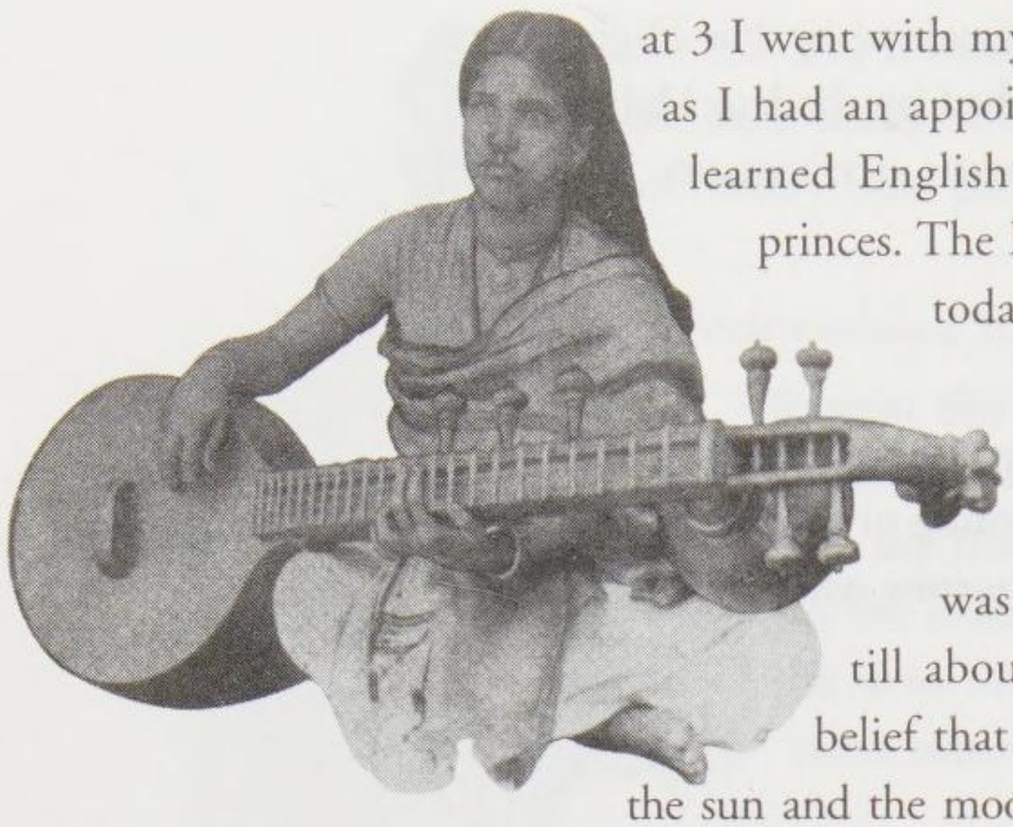


Sunday 4th October 1903

This afternoon we went to Mr Sankara Subba Iyer's house and finished his portrait but we could not quite complete it though we greatly improved it. We are to go again on Wednesday.

Monday 5th October 1903

This morning I painted the Nair Lady's picture to be presented to Shankaran Tampi, the favorite of the Maharaja. In the afternoon



at 3 I went with my nephew Rajan and Kunjunni to the Public Gardens as I had an appointment with Mr A.S. Ferguson under whom I had learned English for some time while he was the guardian to the princes. The Maharaja's procession to Shasthamangalam took place today, we witnessed from the Public Gardens.

Tuesday 6th October 1903

There was an Eclipse of the moon to night. It was nearly total. It commenced at about 7 and lasted till about 10 p.m. The night was clear and cloudless. The belief that Eclipses are caused by the monster Rahu swallowing the sun and the moon is still very strong among the non English knowing natives. Many therefore purified themselves by ablution after the eclipse was over.

Wednesday 7th October 1903

This morning at 10.30 we went to Mr Shankara Subbar Iyer's the late Dewan's bungalow at Karmara[?] for breakfast according to invitation. After meals my brother had his usual siesta while I worked on the old Dewan's portrait, as it was necessary to finish it that same day. At about 3.30 he gave a sitting and I gave the finishing touches to the face, hands etc. We returned home at about 6.30. I did not feel well enough to go to my wife's house.

Thursday 8th October 1903

I have symptoms of a strong attack of cold. My bowels too are constipated. My cousin K.R.R. is suffering from cold and this evening he has fever. My wife sends word to me that there was to be a dramatic performance at her house, the play being Shakuntala[233] and that I would [*sic*] be present, but I could not oblige her owing to my indisposition.

Friday 9th October 1903

Last night I felt feverish and had not a quiet night. I took a dose of Rubinat Water early this morning to reverse the constipation. I did not feel disposed to work to day and so I enjoyed complete rest. I have headache and sore throat though not much of fever. My cousin is much better today. I had only Coyi today.

Monday 12th October 1903

My brother, myself and K.R.R. left Trivandrum this morning at 11 and arrived at Cherayankel in the evening. We have engaged a cabin-boat to take us to Ernakulam. I had fever last evening and I thought I would be unable to start today but I am better today though [I] still suffer from cold. K.R.R. leaves tomorrow for Kilimanur. We left tonight for Quilon.

Tuesday 13th October 1903

Reached Tevalli at Quilon about 7. Took Coffee and went out for a drive towards the new Railway station with Mr Paramee Pillai M.B. My health is better. In the evening after supper we left for Mavelikara. When Quilon is connected with Tinnevelly by railway we can save much time and money, but it would take yet another year or so.

Wednesday 14th October 1903

Reached Mavelikara early this morning. My brother Ittikomer[234] was awaiting us at Kayamkulam till midnight, but we were a little too late in arriving at the place. The object of our alighting at Kayamkulam was to have [a] consultation with the astrologer who is said to be doing wonders in the way of prophesy. I have myself no belief in palmistry, fortune telling etc., for it is my firm conviction that God has not given men the power to pierce into the mystics of the dark future, for the consequences of possessing such a power would be disastrous to the continuance of the world. Left Mavelikara the same night.

Thursday 15th October 1903

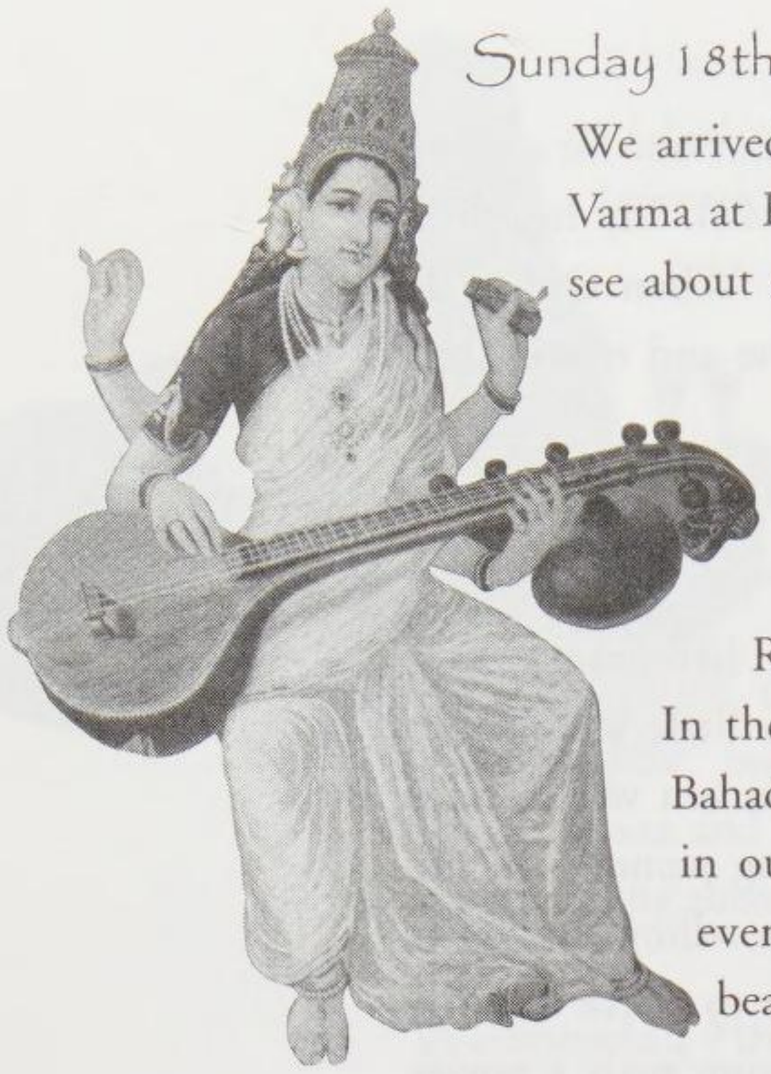
Reached Alleppy at 6 o'clock this morning. After breakfast we left the place and towards evening reached Tannirmukom a very inhospitable place on the western shore of the Vembanad Lake. Neither milk nor butter-milk or other necessities are available. The inhabitants are subject to elephantiasis and leprosy more than in any other place in Travancore. The Traveller's Bungalow very dirty and uncomfortable.

Friday 16th October 1903

Reached Ernakulam early in the morning, put up at the palace as the guests of the 13th Prince, at 2 took [a] train for Trichur where we halted for the night as the guests of the 6th Prince. After supper we went to the Eastern Kurapam to hear the singing of a girl well known for her talents. It was a typical Nayar[235] home and everything was sweet and well arranged. We gave the girl presents for her proficiency in music.

Saturday 17th October 1903

We left Trichur this morning at 11, changed train[s] at Shorunur and continued our journey to Madras. We travelled first class. At Olavakote we met Mr Amanatha Pattar who said he was going to Waltair to make plague preventive measures, since the disease was already at Coimbatore and [the] Nilgiris.



Sunday 18th October 1903

We arrived at Madras this morning and stay with my nephew Rama Varma at Royapettah. This evening we drove to the Central Station to see about our luggage, next visited Mr Baliah Naidu's.

Monday 19th October 1903

At the desire of our friend Mr Baliah Naidu we removed our residence to his bungalow on the Poonamally Road. He has made excellent arrangements for our comfort. In the morning we visited Sir Bhashayam Iyengar and Dewan Bahadur R.V. Srinivasa Iyer. In the evening we drove to the beach in our friend's carriage-and-pair and returned at about 7. Last evening we met C. Karanakar Menon of 'The Hindu' at the beach and were talking [for a] long [time].

Tuesday 20th October 1903

This morning I paid a visit to Thurston who is shortly going home on leave and handed to him the painting of the 'Retired Sepoy' as a present to the Art Gallery in the Madras Museum. In the afternoon we called on the National Bank, cashed a cheque for Rs 6000 and then deposited the amount in my name with Messrs Arbuthnot & Co., on fixed deposit at 5 per cent interest. The number of the receipt they granted me is H. 6438. We left by the Bombay Mail this evening for Karli.

Wednesday 21st October 1903

Our journey was not so trying as we had expected since we were almost alone till we reached Guntakal where a Punjabi military officer joined us as a fellow passenger, as plenty of rain has fallen all along, the weather was not warm. At Poona there was a rush of passengers but we were not inconvenienced as we got down at Karli soon after. It was midnight and Mr Schleicher and Bhow Sahib were at the station. The air was very cool and pleasant. We stayed at Mr Schleicher's bungalow.

Thursday 22nd October 1903

Karli

The amount left with us today is Rs 165–6 as. We had a long conversation with Mr Schlucker [Schleicher] today and he has promised to settle our accounts on Tuesday next by paying up the whole balance. In the afternoon we visited the Press. There is no work today. There is a stock of playing cards and labels and Mr Schleicher is printing cheap pictures to oust the cheap German pictures[236] from the Indian markets.

Friday 23rd October 1903

This morning we paid a visit to the Press which was at work. In the afternoon I walked to the Karli Village to make a sketch of the tank showing reflections, but owing to a breeze that kept disturbing the surface of the water no reflections could be seen. On my return brother and I went to the Bhaji Village[237] as invited by Mr Bhow Sahib the leading man. He entertained us at coffee and [*sic*] fruits etc. at 6 p.m.

Saturday 24th October 1903

Left Karli by midday train. We travelled first class and we had no fellow passengers. The Ghaut scene after we left Khandla was very grand and beautiful. Between picturesque hills in the immediate foreground opened a vista of the hazy plains far down below. We reached Victoria Terminus at 5 in the evening and proceeded to our temporary residence on the Kalbadevi Road.

Sunday 25th October 1903

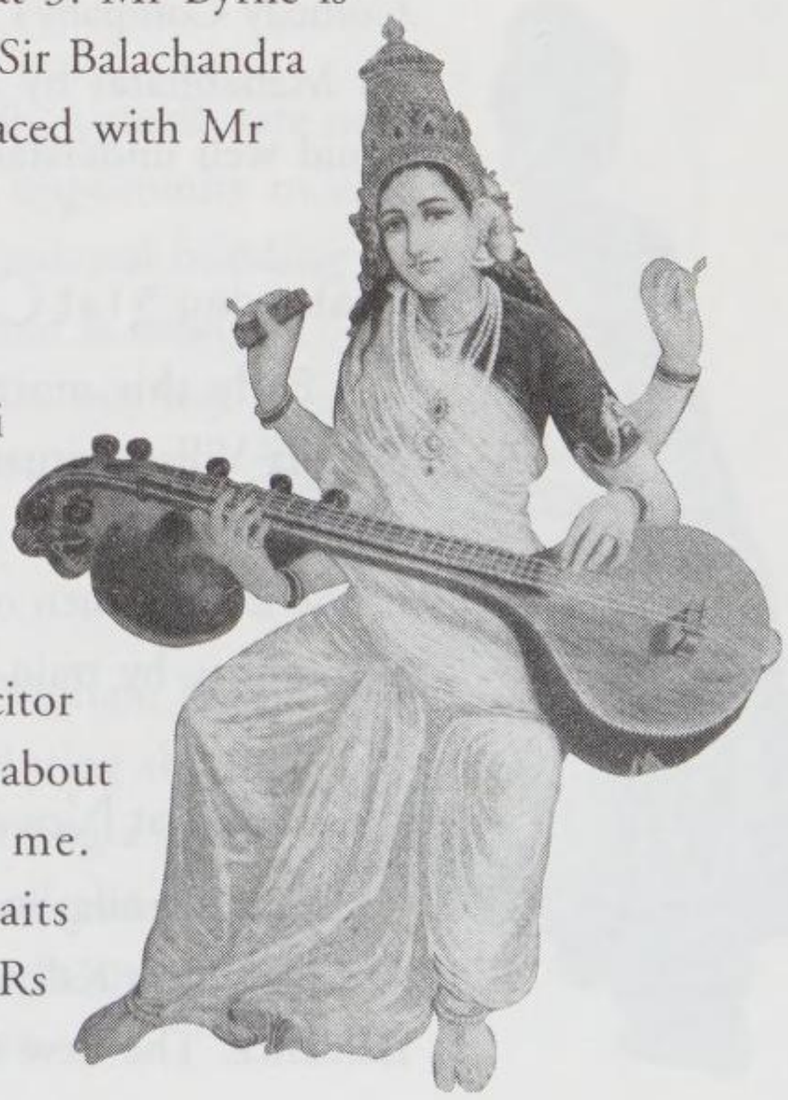
Balance left with us to day is Rs 142-6 as. In the evening we went to look out for an other lodging since there is so much noise and bustle at our present residence. We liked the bungalow at Tardeo but its proximity to two mills rendered it unfit for us.

Monday 26th October 1903

Early this morning I paid a visit to Sir Balachandra and his brother. At 12 o'clock I called on Mr Dixit my solicitor to consult him about the final sale deed of our press. Mr Bapuji, I and Mr Schleicher went to Mr Byrne, Solicitor, who promised to draw up the deed tomorrow at 3. Mr Byrne is Mr Schleicher's counsel. In the evening at 7 we called on Sir Balachandra to get the documents relating to the Press. They were placed with Mr Bapuji as an umpire.

Tuesday 27th October 1903

Early this morning I went to see the house at Gamdevi [Road]. I liked it. I and Shriram [Pant] next called on Sir Balachandra for certain accounts relating to our press. After breakfast went to Mr Brynne's office where I met Bapuji and Schleicher. The latter paid me through his solicitor Rs 4000 promising to pay the balance of Rs 2144-1-3 in about 10 days and then get the conveyance deed from me. We received Rs 600 from the Raja of Vollur for portraits painted. He owes Rs 300 still. Balance this evening is Rs 128-3-2 pice.



Wednesday 28th October 1903

In the morning called on Sir Balachandra to get medicine for Brother and to consult him with regard to the complaint. Our cook Chathu is suffering from [+++]. In the afternoon I wrote a letter to Messrs Arbuthnot & Co. enclosing a draft of Hundi for Rs 4000 to be credited to my account and invested on fixed deposit for one year at 5 percent interest payable half yearly in the same way as the Rs 6000 invested with them on the 20th instant. The draft was obtained from the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China. I next visited Messrs Marks & Co., Hussainally Abdulally, Kump and Co. etc. Returning home at about 5.30. Bapuji and Pannuswami Pillai came.

Thursday 29th October 1903

Last night we witnessed the performance of Sinjit Saubhadra of Kirloskar Dramatic Company at one of the Grant Road Theaters. This is the best Mahratta dramatic troupe. A carriage has been engaged from today at a rate of Rs 3 per day for our use. Its owner is a Parse[e] who had given his carriage on former occasions too. We drove to the Fort, gave Brother's watch to Charpie & Co. for repairs, ordered Laidlaw & Whiteaway for two long coats for summer weather.

Friday 30th October 1903

In the morning we paid a visit to Mr Jagmohan Das Vandravandas Bhaiset our friend who had been suffering lately from [a] paralytic attack. He has fortunately escaped from the first attack and is now alright. In the evening Mr Bapuji and we two went to Mr Soundy and purchased tickets for the London Comedy Company's play of 'H.E. The Governor'. Next we attended a discourse on Mahabharat by a clever Banares Pandit as he spoke in Hindusthani we could well understand him.

Saturday 31st October 1903

Early this morning we left by steamboat from the Carnae Bunder for Panvila Village situated among the hills and crags about 2 miles to the south east of Bombay. We enjoyed the trip on the steamer very well. At Panwil three of the leading men of the place invited [us] for coffee and pansupari. Returned to Bombay by train from the Mumbra station.

Sunday 1st November 1903

This evening we removed to a bungalow on the Gamdevi Road near the fire engine, as Kalbadevi Road was too noisy and crowded to be agreeable for residence. The new residence requires a lot of cleaning.

Monday 2nd November 1903

This morning we paid a visit to Dr Mathai's dispensary at the Chukter[?] Street. [I]t is a pity the Doctor is not able to have a better building for his dispensary. This afternoon I received from Messrs Arbuthnot & Co. the receipt for Rs 4000 I had remitted to them on the 28th instant. In the evening we drove to the Fort visiting some shops were we had business. Soon after our return home we had the pleasure of receiving a visit from Mr Permanand Das Baghavan Das of Hyderabad.

Tuesday 3rd November 1903

This morning we paid a visit to Mr Tribhavan Das Varjivan Das at his house at Mahalakshmi and to Mr Bhagavan Das Gopal Das on the Ridge Road Malabar Hill. In the evening we did some work on the portrait of Mr Devarajanand [and] at about 6 went out for a walk on the Chaupati Sea Fall. Tonight we are going to see the London Comedy Company's performance of His Excellency the Governor.

Wednesday 4th November 1903

Last night we witnessed the Comedy of 'H.E. the Governor' at the Novelty. I did not like it much nor did Brother or Bapuji. There was not much for the display of an actor's skill. The whole thing was a domestic incident and nothing else. This morning I painted the Parsee Widow's jacket and Sari, while brother retouched the Nizzam's head for Mr Schleicher. In the evening we returned the visit of our Hyderabad friend Mr Permanand Das. He lives in the palace of Devaki Namdas Maharaja, one of the high priests of the Vaishnavas of the Vallabhachari persuasion. The building is splendid.

Thursday 5th November 1903

This afternoon we drove with Mr Bala Sahib of Aundh, a small state near Satra[238] to the Apollo Bunder and took advantage of the opportunity to visit the Taj Mahal Hotel which Mr Tata is building. It is a colossal building with three domes resembling those of the Taj. The first floor is nearly ready for habitation and people have begun to occupy it. On our way back home we called Mr Dharmsey Moraji, but he was not at home.

Friday 6th November 1903

Early this morning we paid a visit to Mr Puroshotram Vishram Moraji in whose house on the Kalbadevi Road we had put up during the first few days of our arrival here. He is a man of taste and is writing a history of Shivaji the great Mahratta Hero.[239] He has visited all the scenes connected with his exploits. He has got some good pictures and picture books. There are few Bhalias with artistic and literary taste.

Saturday 7th November 1903

I went this morning as usual for a walk and to study the sunrise effect which is particularly beautiful in the misty morning. I am making a sketch of it from memory. In the evening we went to the Fort and purchased from Mr Hussainally some stationary [*sic*].

Sunday 8th November 1903

This morning we went to Mr Chaturbhuj Khinji's to photograph him and his wife who are anxious to have their portraits painted by us. On our return we were pleased to see Mr A. Raffin whom we had known 10 years ago as a boy at Grant Road.

Monday 9th November 1903

Today we have severed all connection with our press known as 'The Ravi Varma Fine Art Lithographic Press' selling it to Mr Fritz Schleicher for a consideration of Rs 25,000 over and above paying all the debts connected with the establishment amounting to Rs 5 or 6 thousand. Out of this amount Rs 12,000 has been invested on fixed deposit in my name with Messrs Arbuthnoth & Co. bearing interest at 5 percent. The proprietorship of the Press was in my name though it was called after Brother.

Tuesday 10th November 1903

This afternoon I went to the Chartered Bank of India, China, and Japan and got a draft for Rs 2000 payable to Messers Arbuthnot and Co. Received Rs 300 from Coconada in part payment of the price of the portrait of King Edward VII. In the evening met our old friend Mr Govardhan Das Khatas, who was our partner for some time, at the Band Stand. He introduced us to Karimbhai Ibrahim and his son who are anxious to have their father's portrait painted.

Wednesday 11th November 1903

I despatched today the first half of the draft for Rs 2000 to Messrs Arbuthnot & Co., in a registered cover to be placed with them on Fixed Deposit. The total amount now invested in this firm is Rs 12,000 in my name, and the annual interest at 5 per cent is Rs 600. As there is no suitable light for painting we have decided to remove the tiles from a portion of the covered passage leading to the kitchen from the main building.

Thursday 12th November 1903

This morning we paid a visit to Mr Chathurbhoj Khinji to ascertain particulars regarding his own and his wife's portraits. He promised to call on us in the evening and then give us the necessary information. Glass has

been put on the roof of our studio and we have now good light. In the evening at about 6 Mr Pushotam Vishram called and desired us to paint a picture of Shivaji's coronation. He has promised to give all historical notes necessary.

Friday 13th November 1903

Not having been well for the last three or four days, I opened my bowels this morning with Rubinat Water. In the afternoon I went to Phadkis Studio to make an enlargement of a negative. This done I returned home and went again with Brother to the market to purchase curtains and other things for our studio. On return home we saw Mr Chaturbhuj Khinji waiting for us. His request is that we should make some reduction in our charges.

Saturday 14th November 1903

The orders that we have now in hand are two and both are from Dr F.E. Dawar. One bust is of his deceased mother and the other of his late wife. Three other orders have been promised but not actually given. It is very difficult to deal with Banias and Bhattias. They want the price to be always reduced.

Sunday 15th November 1903

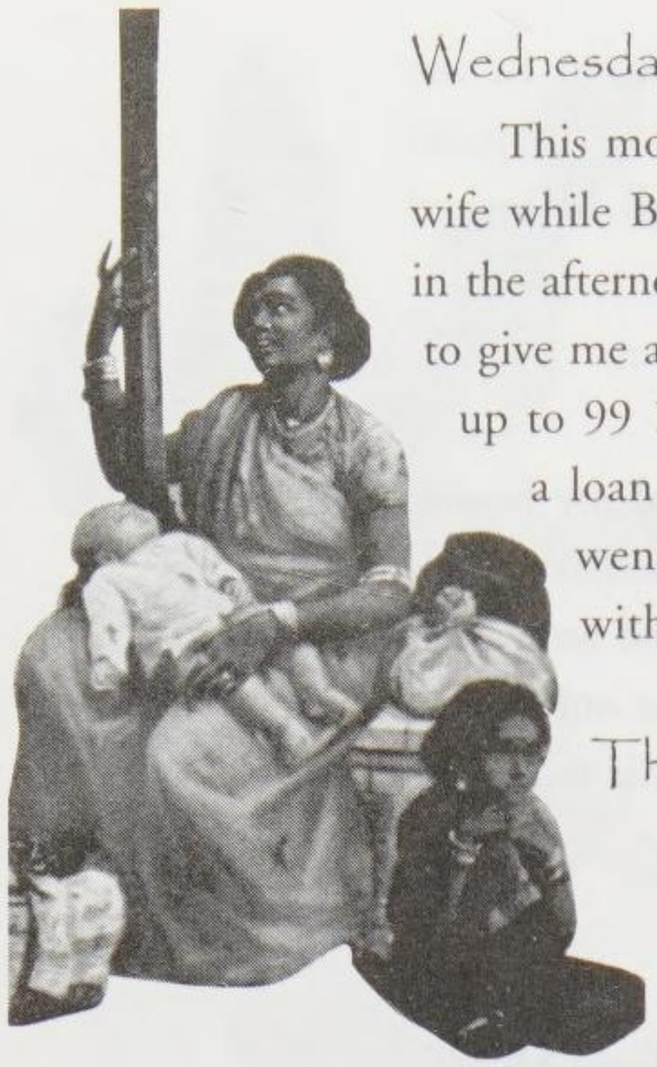
This morning we went to see Mr Govardhan Khatas, but he was not at home. Next we paid a visit to Mr Dharmaji Maharaji. In the evening drove to the Victoria Gardens which have been much improved since we saw them last.

Monday 16th November 1903

This morning I did not go out for a walk as I did not feel well. In the afternoon I received from Madras [Messrs] Arbuthnot & Co. their receipt for Rs 2000 I had remitted to them on the 11th inst. In the evening we went to Mr Hussainally's shop and took certain oil-colours and brushes. At the Band Stand we spent a few minutes in conversation with a lady friend and her husband, then returned home.

Tuesday 17th November 1903

We paid a visit to Dr Dawar at his house on the Wandley[?] Road to select a suitable sari for his wife's portrait. Poor man, his eyes filled with tears when he unpacked along with his late wife's clothes, a lock of hair and he could not speak for some time. We were moved too. We next visited the son and heir of Mr Assari Virji who died a year ago after he had his portrait painted by us in a very successful manner. He was 78 years old.



Wednesday 18th November 1903

This morning I was engaged in painting the body and sari of Dr Dawar's wife while Brother painted his mother's head. As I did not feel well we drove in the afternoon to Dr Mathai's dispensary at the Chakle[?] and he was pleased to give me a mixture. My complaint is unequal temperature of the body going up to 99 1/2 towards evening and a trouble headache. We gave Mr Naoroji a loan of Rs 30 when we met him at the Band Stand from where we went to the Apollo Bunder and hence returned home. Bapuji was with us.

Thursday 19th November 1903

Brother and Bapuji went this morning on a visit to a Bania gentleman from whom Rs 500 are due to us for a portrait executed for him. I was too unweak [*sic*] [unwell] to go with them. I had feverishness [*sic*] and headache throughout the day. Bapuji came in the afternoon and wanted our cook to make certain vegetables dished after the fashion of his own caste men. They were very good.

Friday 20th November 1903

Dr Bhajikar visited Chathu this morning and dressed his wound. The patient had a very restless night and the doctor says as the wound heals the other symptoms will disappear. He prescribed for me a mixture for me [*sic*]. In the afternoon I had fever the temperature having been nearly 100 degrees. I remained at home the whole evening and did not do any work. Dr Mathai called at about 3 p.m.

Saturday 21st November 1903

I am still confined within the four walls of my room. I am suffering from a nasty headache about the left temple. Sometimes I feel severe shooting pains. The doctor said it would disappear with the feverish symptoms. I am taking quinine mixture. This is not the first time that I have this sort of headache.

Sunday 22nd November 1903

Another day spent at home without any work. My brother feels rather lonely without me in [*sic*] his evening drives. I am better today on the whole.

Monday 23rd November 1903

I had to spend this day also at home not feeling quite disposed to go out, did little in the way of work, as too much concentration of mind produces headache. Chathu is making favourable progress. The wound is fast healing. He has slight fever on [?] for which Dr Mathai is treating him. Brother out as usual for his evening drive.

Tuesday 24th November 1903

Received a letter from the private secretary to theThakore Sahib of Gondal confirming the terms on which we were to visit his state on business, but we disagreed with the condition stating the remuneration which was put down at 900 instead of 1000. We wrote back that unless that latter sum was paid for each portrait we shall not accept the offer.

Wednesday 25th November 1903

I went out with Brother for a drive this evening and got back his watch which had been given to Messrs Charpia & Co. for repairs which cost Rs 25. My health is much improved now. I purchased a bottle of Fellow's Syrup from Madow & Co. for Rs 1-12-0 and commenced taking it this evening. Dr Mathai has recommended [to] me [to] take it regularly for some months as it relieves one of headache, poverty of blood and other complaints.

Thursday 26th November 1903

I am almost relieved of my health and feverishness and I have commenced today my daily baths. This morning I worked on Dr Dawar's wife's portrait. In the evening we went to Sitaram Buildings where Mr Bapuji lives and with him went to the Apollo Bunder where we spent about a quarter of an hour. We returned home at about 7 o'clock.

Friday 27th November 1903

This morning Dr Dawar came and had a look at his wife's portrait and said that he could not recognize her. Though it requires improvements we did not think it was so great a failure. These are the difficulties of portrait painting especially from Photographs. An other Parsee youth came with a profile of his deceased brother and wants a three quarter face made from this profile.

Saturday 28th November 1903

This evening we paid a visit to Mr Purushotham Vishnu Moraji's at his bungalow at Mahalaxmi where a yagna or the offer of burnt ablutions [was held]. Numbers of Gujrati Brahmins were sitting round [a] big fire and pouring milk pottage into the fire repeating mantrams. Dharamsey Morarji was among those invited. We returned home at 7.30.

Sunday 29th November 1903

This afternoon we went by train to Ghatkopar and thence drove to the Vehar Lake 6 miles distant [*sic*]. It is not as large a sheet of water as I had expected it to be. It is one of the lakes that supply Bombay with water. We supped at Shriram Pant's house at Ghatkopar.

Monday 30th November 1903

This afternoon Prince Samatsinghi of Palitana sent a tray of sugar candy with the announcement that a grand son has been born to him. We therefore called on him in the evening to congratulate him. His eldest son who has now become for the first time a father and who unlike his father is a stout young man, was also present. We saw a number of Kathiawar men come to congratulate the Prince, squatting on the ground after true oriental fashion.

Sunday 1st December 1903

I went this afternoon at 2 to Kalyan by the Poona Mail to make a sketch of the ferry across the river. From the station drove to the river side in a tonga, crossed it in a ferry boat, and made the sketch of the opposite shore with some boats, one or two buildings lightened by the evening sun and the distant hills purple and grey with touches of warm colour. Returned home at 8 p.m.

Wednesday 2nd December 1903

This evening we called on Powel & Co. to whom we have given an order for making a truss for brother. The proprietor who called himself a Nair originally belonged to Cochin, his mother having come and settled in Bombay. The Nair was born and brought up here and took to the chemist's business in which he had scored great success. He showed us some of the surgical instruments and artificial hands and legs his firm has produced. They were very good. At night we went to the 'Novelty' to see 'Harischandra'[240] by Baleivalas[?] Company. There are two actresses who are good looking, but unfortunately [they] lack musical taste and training.

Thursday 3rd December 1903

This evening we called on Mr Khimji Assur Virji at Modi Khana near Bori Bunder to giver [*sic*] a coat of varnish to his father's portrait which we had painted nearly ten years ago. After this work we took a walk to the kerosine-oil-wells near the Ballard Pier. They are big tanks of tin or lead into which kerosine-oil is pumped from the steamers before being sold in retail. We returned home after enjoying the evening for a short time.

Friday 4th December 1903

This evening we went to the Cornae Bunder to watch the moon-rise effect, but owning to our ignorance of the place we had to wander a good deal before we could get a suitable point of view. After supper Mr Bapuji took us to the Fair at Nana[?] Sankar Seth's 'Wadi' on the Jaria[?] Road which was lined by stalls laden with all sorts of things for sale. In the garden there was singing and afterwards fire-works, a large number of guests being present.

Saturday 5th December 1903

We remained working till about 5 o'clock in the evening when we went to the Apollo Bunder to see again the moon-rise which was indeed very beautiful. On our return home we found Naoroji waiting to take us to show the bread and loaf making process. The bakery belonged to a Parsee gentlemen. We were surprised to find that they were using the hops for leavening the dough.

Sunday 6th December 1903

This evening we attended the evening party given to H.H. the Gaekwar by Menon[?] Vital Das Damodar Thakersey and Purushotham Vishram Moraji at the Bungalow of the former at Mahalakshmi.

Monday 7th December 1903

This evening we drove to Hussainally, purchased 8 bottles of varnish and six bottles of turpentine. Gave an other coat of varnish to Mr Assur Virji's portrait, then went to the market and ordered the Mohammedan dress maker to make half a dozen shirts for us. Next we called on Doctor Mathai who—we heard—was unwell. It was about 6 o'clock, we were pleased to find that he was not so badly off as we thought. From there we returned home through Kamatipura.

Tuesday 8th December 1903

We had received a telegram from Mr Baliah Naidu asking the price of Kilson and Washington Lamps for the Park Fair in Madras. Yesterday it was too late to make enquiries and so I went out this morning first to Richmod & Sons, Chandeliers, who charged Rs 1155 for six lamps Kilson. I went[?] to Mahur and Co., Fort, whose charges for Washington Lamps also amounted nearly to the same sum. I telegraphed to Mr Baliah. Visited Sir Balachandra in the evening.

Wednesday 9th December 1903

This noon I went again to Kabhai to finish the sketch of the ferry I commenced the other day. When I reached the ferry it was nearly 3.30. I had only an hour and a half to work. There was no wind and so the surface of the river was placid and everything was reflected as in a mirror. I found at the conclusion of the work that I could improve it still further if I paid an other visit to the place. I returned by the Poona Passenger and when I reached home it was[?] about[?] 8 o'clock.

Thursday 10th December 1903

The whole day we were very busy finishing the new picture and retouching old ones. In the evening we went to the Churchgate Station by rail and after visiting one or two shops returned home by train. This morning two or three wandering minstrels came singing at our

door. One of them sung very well indeed and we were so pleased with him that we asked him to come again in the evening.

Friday 11th December 1903

This morning at about 8 landed in Bombay Lord Lamington the new Governor. We were too busy to go and see his arrival. From his photograph which all the daily papers have published, he appears to be a handsome young man. In the evening [we] went to the market to enquire if [we could] get big mirrors for the Raja of Kurapam. We have given up our visit to Gondal.

Saturday 12th December 1903

Lord Lamington the new Governor landed this morning and not yesterday as I have meant by mistake. Had nothing worth recording yesterday and the 11th ought to have been left a blank. Received a letter from the Raja of Kurapam regarding certain mirrors.

Sunday 13th December 1903

At 9 to night we attended the music party in connection with the marriage of our friend Bhavani Das Narain Das Motilala. The woman who sang and danced was both candid[?] and skillful. We returned home at about 10 o'clock in the morning.

Monday 14th December 1903

This morning I went to the Girgaum side with the object of making a pencil sketch of 'Cold Drink Shop' as they advertise. It was not as interesting as I thought. On my way back I called on Mr Durandhar, Artist,[241] Mr Bhagavan Das gave [a] sitting, Mr Rustom Hormusji Coorlawala called in the afternoon with his mother. We attended the wedding procession of Mr Bhavani Das. There was a very large attendance of friends and relatives of the young man.

Tuesday 15th December 1903

I called on Mr Dwarak Das who in consultation with the other trustees of the late Mr Dharmsey Sandir Das gave an order for a life size full length portrait of the deceased gentlemen with his photographs and instructions as to his complexion etc. Brother got fever towards the afternoon. I called on the Income Tax Collector with his son Mr Rustom Hormusji to represent to him that it was unjust to levy the tax from us, as we had made no profit during our stay.

Wednesday 16th December 1903

Brother had high fever last evening but this morning the temperature has become nearly normal. I visited Dr Sir Balachandra and got a mixture for him.

We were intending to leave to night but owing to Brother's ill health our departure has been postponed to the 21st. Three oil paintings of Brother were this day despatched to the joint secretary, Madras Industrial Exhibition Committee. Ayappan[242] who has recovered from his fever has had a relapse this evening. A mixture has been got for him from Powel and Co.

Thursday 17th December 1903

In the morning Sir Balachandran called to enquire after my brother's health and after a few minutes' conversation left. In the afternoon we [I and Venku][243] went to the market to make some purchases. I returned home at about 6 and went out again to Powel and Co. to ask them to make certain improvements in the truss that they made for Brother. On my way back I paid a visit to Mr Shivaji Dharmaji.

Friday 18th December 1903

Early this morning I went to Mr Bapuji's to enquire after his health, then went to the Jackaria Masjid and made a pencil sketch of the gate of the Mosque. In the afternoon I went to the Sitaram Buildings from which I tried to make a sketch of the Bombay harbour. Unfortunately for me a thick veil of smoke or mist enveloped the distance and shut out the hills from view.

Saturday 19th December 1903

Early in the morning I went again to the Jackaria Masjid to sketch some of the details of the Masjid gate. From there I went to Hussainally's shop and took an easel and some colours and returned home. Brother was sketching the portrait of a Parsee with [a] fine grey beard [with a] bright and cheerful countenance.[244]

Sunday 20th December 1903

This evening we paid a parting visit to such of our friends as had called on us during our stay here, but all were out. We purchased Fellow's Syrup from Powell and Co.

Monday 21st December 1903

We could not leave Bombay today as we have intended owing to want of room in the Mail train for Madras. All the seats of the 1st and 2nd class carriages had been pre-engaged. In the morning I went again to the Jackaria Masjid to sketch. Today being I'dh—a Mohamedan festival—all followers of Islam appear in their gala dress. In the evening Brother and I paid a visit to Mhatre's studio.[245]

Tuesday 22nd December 1903

This morning we received intelligence of the success of the Thiruvella Rajahs in their suit against Mariyapilli.[246] We were very

very pleased at the news as we have taken a deep interest in the family and as we have advanced them monies to conduct their cases. We left Bombay for Madras by Mail train at 9.30 p.m. A few friends were at the station to see us off.

Wednesday 23rd December 1903

The whole day spent in the train. Our only companion was Mr Wacha, [D.E. Wacha] the General Secretary of the National Congress who was proceeding to Madras. He is a well known patriot who has been working hard for the amelioration of the British administration of India. The last night and the morning were very cold. In the evening Mr Wacha became sick and vomited several times. He said that the jolting of the train produced sickness in him. At Wadi an Englishman came into our compartment and behaved rudely.

Thursday 24th December 1903

There was a long plague examination at Perambur this morning. We were given passports to present ourselves for examination before a medical officer. We drove to Mr Bauliah Naidu's house on the Poonamallie Road. My brother's second son Rama Varma[247] who is attending the School of Arts was present at the station. In the evening we drove to the Central Station to get back our luggage and next visited Hindu ['The Hindu'] office before returning home.

Friday 25th December 1903

This morning we went to Royapettah to engage a carriage. At present the carriage hire is very exorbitant [*sic*]. We have engaged one for Rs 7 per day. Madras is now full of visitors [who] come to see the industrial Exhibition, Congress, Park Fair etc. Wrote letter to Kurupam Raja and my cousin K.R.R. The weather at present is good here. We have received invitation cards to attend the Exhibitions.

Saturday 26th December 1903

This morning we drove to the Spring Gardens to attend the opening ceremony of the Exhibition which was performed by H.H. The Maharaja of Mysore. There is a large collection of exhibits from all parts of India. The Fine Arts Section is very poor. We took only a cursory view of the show as the time was up. In the evening we drove to Mylapore.

Sunday 27th December 1903

The Industrial Exhibition Committee wants Brother to be judge of the Committee for awarding prizes to the exhibits. In the evening we visited the 6th Prince of Cochin and then returned home.

Monday 28th December 1903

We went to the Government House at about 1 p.m. and wrote our names in the visitor's book. We next visited Mr L.M. Wyneh, Private Secretary to the Governor and asked if we might give a coat of varnish to Sir A. Havelock's portrait, but he said that we need not take the trouble since a certain man from Calcutta had undertaken the work. The Congress commenced its sittings. We did not attend this day's meeting. There are signs of approaching rain, the sky is getting cloudy.

Tuesday 29th December 1903

A wet and rainy morning. At 2.30 paid a visit to H.H. the young Maharaja of Mysore. When we got down from the carriage the Maharaja himself came to the door and took us in. We had about 15 minutes' conversation. He is—though young—a very polite and courteous prince. We were very pleased with him. We next went to the meeting of the judges of the Exhibition's Committee. Brother and myself are judges in the Fine Arts Section and I am appointed to award prizes in the Musical Instruments [Section] too.

Wednesday 30th December 1903

A very wet and rainy day. We did not go out owing to the heavy downpour. This state of the weather has spoilt the Exhibition, the Congress and the Park Fair, all which are leaking and flooded. There is a general disappointment expressed. We spent the day very lazily at home as nothing could be done in the heavy rain.

Thursday 31st December 1903

The whole of the last night [and] this morning rainy. In the afternoon we visited the Exhibitions notwithstanding the rain and went round and examined the various articles in the Fine Arts Section. We met there a fellow judge—Dr Maitland—who was engaged on a similar duty. The Mount Road near W.E. Smith & Co. and Chindadripet are under knee-deep water.

1904

Friday 1st January 1904

We went early in the morning to the Exhibition building where we met our fellow judges. We walked round and noted down those things we thought worthy of prizes and commendations. The Mysore Sandal Wood Carvings and the Vizagapatnam ivory carved caskets are wonderful works and we have recommended gold medals for them.

Abindranath Tagore
Jamanieprakash Ganguli
Artist of Calcutta
Rattansi Liladhar
A Bhatya gentleman whose acquaintance we were glad to make on account of his musical proclivities. He resides on the Malabar Hill, Bombay
A.L. Nair
Proprietor of the Firm, known as Messers Powell & Co.
Duncan Road
Bombay
Dwarak Das Godhavji and his son Vithal Das Dwarak Das
No 1 Girgam Back Road
Bombay

M. Gopal Menon
Vakil and Municipal Chairman
Tellichery

The End of the Diary and After

C. Raja Raja Varma continued to write a diary till the end of 1904, when he fell seriously ill during their consignment in Mysore. He did not recover and died after an operation for an inflamed intestine which was performed in Madras on 4 January 1905. This last part of the diary has not surfaced yet.

The most reliable account of the last year of the Varma brother is given in N. Balakrishna Nayar's biography (Nayar, N.B., 1953) of Raja Ravi Varma, for which he could rely on the original diaries as well as on interviews which he conducted with family members still alive at that time. In 1953, he could still listen to stories told by Mangalabai Thampuratty, the youngest sister of the Varma brothers, and to the youngest son of Ravi Varma—Rama Varma.

Documentary evidence on Ravi Varma's life is scarce after his brother ceased to write. The few references in later biographies are mostly hearsay, biased, chronologically unreliable, and at times not well informed either. The following, therefore, cannot be understood as more than an exercise to put together the most reliable data into a chronological order to fill up the blanks in Ravi Varma's remaining short period of life.

The year 1904 was an eventful one.

The 1904 New Year's Honours List of the Imperial government announced the award of the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal to Ravi Varma. The diary entry of that date proudly announces:

The honour bestowed on my brother came without seeking. We never spoke to anyone about it, nor have we tried to get it.... This is the first time in Indian history that an artist is so honoured. Honours so far were given to officials and rich men who donated liberally to charitable causes. This honour will not fail the progress of art in India. The satisfaction this gives to us [the members of the Kilimanur family] is not a small one. I'm extremely glad, since the man who is honoured for his devotion of art and as the foremost painter of India, is my brother and head of my family. I have reason for great happiness being his inseparable companion, colleague and helper. (Nayar, N.B., 1953, pp. 180–1).[248]

The award was given in the name of Raja Ravi Varma, which caused ripples in the jealous and closed society of the Travancore aristocracy, who claimed that the suffix Raja was reserved only for the royals. Ravi Varma countered the opinion by claiming that in matrilinear usage he was entitled to affix a part of his maternal uncle's name to his own, and his maternal uncle's name was Raja Raja Varma. Besides, he claimed descendence from the Rajas of Baypore near Calicut.

Ravi Varma's granddaughters were adopted to the royal court of Travancore as Ranis of Attingale and therefore were the senior and junior Ranis of Travancore and future mothers of the ruler of the state. Ravi Varma had a secure and fixed place in the highest echelons of the traditional aristocratic hierarchy of Travancore.

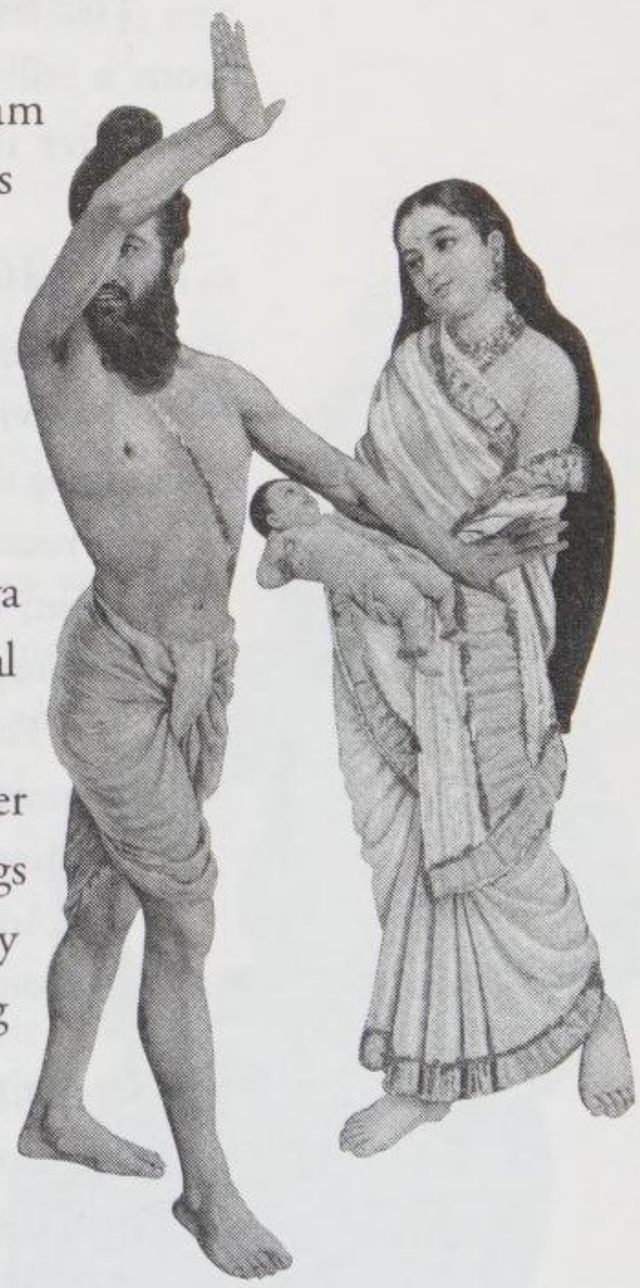
The brothers participated in the 1903–4 exhibition of fine arts in Madras, which fetched them several medals. Raja Varma's painting *Siesta* fetched the gold medal and, for his two other landscapes *Triplicane Temple* and *Morning Prayer*, he was awarded the bronze medal. Ravi Varma's son Rama Varma also got an award during this exhibition.

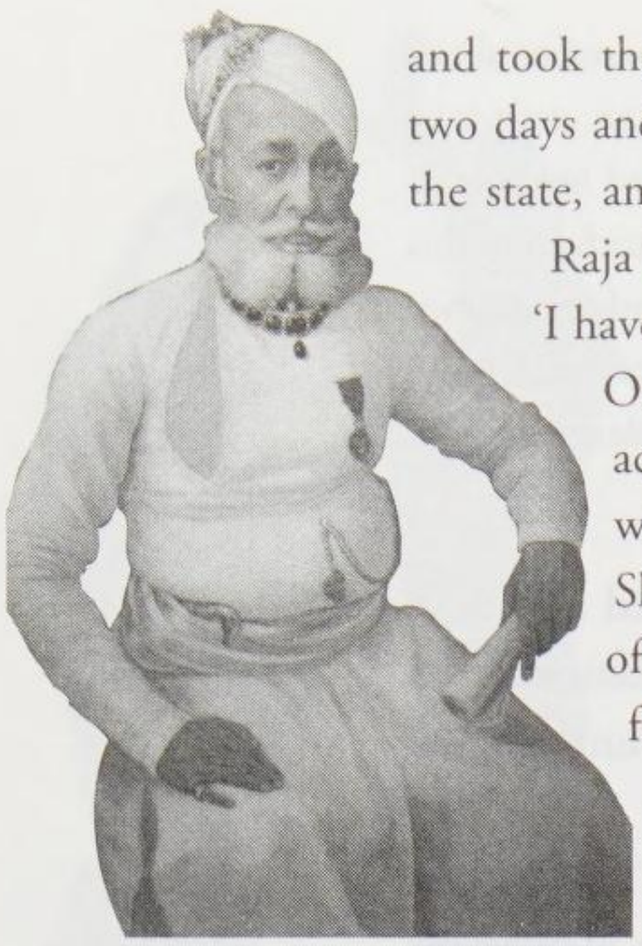
On their way back to Trivandrum they halted at Mayavaram where their nephew Ravi Varma was the collector. There the news reached them that Gode Varma had died. Gode Varma, the middle one of the three Varma brothers, was a littérateur and musician. Ravi Varma had to perform the last rites in Kilimanur. Later, he went to Trivandrum to visit his daughters and granddaughters who were now princesses of the royal household.

In the same year, Ravi Varma pledged the portrait of Sir T. Madhava Rao and four other paintings along with Rs 500 to the Victoria Memorial Fund,[249] Calcutta.

The most important professional consignment during the later half of the year was an invitation to rearrange and repair the paintings in the newly built Jagan Mohan Palace in Mysore. Nayar's biography of Ravi Varma cites extensively from the diary entries, supplying authentic notes (Nayar, N.B., 1953: 205).

On 2 July 1904, the Varma brothers started for Mysore, reaching Bangalore railway station on the early morning of 7 July. An officer sent from Mysore Palace received the artist brothers





and took them to a building near the Bangalore Palace. They stayed there for two days and roamed in the town in a coach drawn by two horses provided by the state, and kept ready to their calling in front of their building.

Raja Varma wrote in his diary on the gardens in the Bangalore palace: 'I have never seen such a garden in India with so many European flowers.'

On 9 July 1904 they travelled by train to Mysore and were accommodated in a beautiful two-storeyed building painted white, which was formerly used by one of the ministers of Mysore, Sir Sheshadri Ayyar. A special officer was appointed to see to the needs of the guests. Raja Varma wrote about their sight-seeing during the first days:

> ...In the evening we roamed in a carriage about the city. It is not any more the city we knew 20 years ago.[250] There are wonderful changes. The new houses, gardens, wide avenues and junctions have changed the city into a new one... As I felt a bit sick Doctor Appaya the deputy Doctor of the palace had to be sent for. He prescribed me some medicine. He was from Coorg and could speak some broken Malayalam. He told that he learned it from the Malayalees who were working in the coffee-estates as labourers.

They visited the Maharaja on 10 July at 10.30 a.m. He appreciated art very much. Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar, who was only twenty years old, received the artists with great pleasure, the very same way as did his father twenty years earlier. On that day they talked for twenty minutes and met again the next day.

The lavishness of the hospitality conveyed upon the artists can be judged from a still-extant letter, a communication between the officials in charge to look after the special wishes of the guests:[251]

> July 16th 1904
>
> My Dear Sir
>
> Both Mr Ravi Varma & his brother are very anxious to listen to some Mysore music during their present stay here, and in connection with this I am to ask you to kindly have the necessary instruction issued to the following [persons] to wait on them, and entertain [them] as [it] may with their company. Soshanna & Subbanna (or Veena) Bidar Krishnappa & Vasudhvachan (for vocal music) Gulab Jan (for Hindustani vocal music).
>
> The brothers are making a series of character sketches in watercolours & they are desirous of including various types from Mysore in them. They would like to have the various classes of palace servants....
>
> And indeed, a large number of watercolour sketches are still available which were done during their stay in Mysore.[252]

C. Raja Raja Varma one day entered into the diary the sentence: 'We are painting this portrait with our souls immersed in music.'

And the brothers reciprocated as grandly as they were entertained. Two pavens of gold and two zari-embroidered shawls costing twenty rupees each were

given to the music maestro Bida Krishnappa for teaching them two kirtans. This indeed was a royal gesture.

The Varma brothers also visited places close to Mysore. One entry narrates the visit to Srirangapatnam, the capital city of Tipu Sultan:

We went to visit Srirangapatnam which is only 9 najikas from here. The Fort and the city are situated on an island between the two branches of the Cauvery....

A man from the palace was sent along with us as a guide to explain the history of the Fort. First we visited the palaces around which historians give much importance. We saw the remnants of the Fort which was destroyed by the English in 1799. It is said that Tipu's end had also taken place here.

The hanging bridge, Sri Ramya Nath Temple and the Mosque are some of the sights we saw....

We stood spellbound seeing the grave of Tipu. In the time of Tipu's rule he made the Hindus in Mysore mere slaves. An old Muslim officer told me that the Mysore Government spent 900 rupees a month for preserving Tipu's grave....

The brothers used to go for long evening walks mostly along the path towards Chamundi Hill. It was at the back of the hill that Raja Varma came upon the sight of a village woman stepping out from the pond with a vessel on her head, and shielding her eyes against the setting sun. On the next day, 11 October 1904, he committed to his diary the decision to transfer this scene to a painting.

On 31st October he writes in his diary:

I am painting my picture 'Woman fetching water' or 'At the bank of the pond' which represents the peasant women of Mysore, with great difficulty this morning. She looks into the bright light with her eyes shaded with her left hand. In the background Chamundi Hills is seen standing and also its reflection in the water.

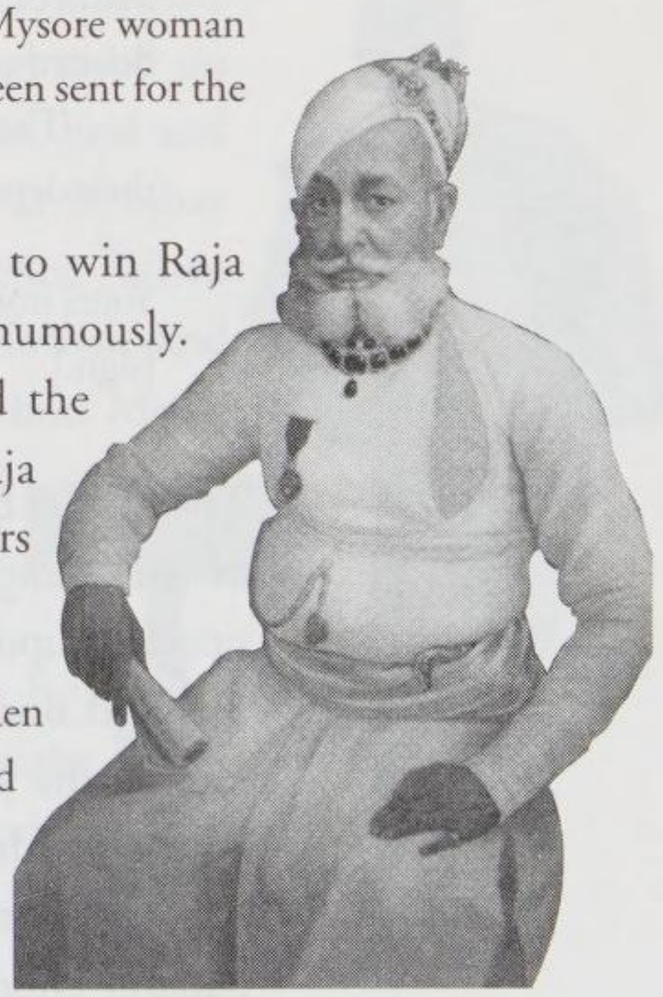
On 7 November 1904 he wrote:

Today I'm feeling better but still I'm weak. Brother has gone to the palace in the afternoon to finish work. I could not go with him. I stayed at home. The picture of the Mysore woman taking water 'At the bank of the pond' 48' x 28' I have completed and it has been sent for the Fine Arts exhibition in Madras which will be held next year.

This was the story of the painting *At the Village Pond* which was to win Raja Varma a gold medal in the 1905 Madras Exhibition—alas—posthumously.

The work in the palace was over by 9 November 1904 and the artist brothers already made their departure visit to the king. Raja Varma seemed to have been in better health that day and he enters into the diary the gifts they received from the king:

A ring, a golden embroidered shawl, a golden turban and a piece of golden coloured silk to each of us. When we came back to our house my illness had started again. My fever was resurfacing and we had to give up our plan to return on the 11th. We sent telegrams informing that we had postponed our journey. We are planning to return on Sunday if my health permits.



This is supposedly the last entry into the diary by C. Raja Raja Varma. During their four-month stay in Mysore, the brothers repaired some of the old paintings which they had done for Chamarajendra Wadiyar—the father of the young king—in 1885 and painted several portraits of the young King Krishnaraja Wadiyar. One of these portraits, a rather extraordinary work—signed by both the brothers—shows the youthful turbaned king standing in European khaki riding breeches; beside him crouches a red-eyed, heavy St Bernard dog. This painting, which is modelled on the modern European portraiture style, does not show the king any more bedecked with paraphernalia of power and theatrical robes, but as a member of the liberal bourgeoisie. The painting was done between 26 July and 22 September. This painting, more than any other, shows the versatility of the artists, who adapted their stylistic canon according to the wishes of their patrons.

The remuneration for the four months of work was some Rs 23,000, which was paid in instalments. A large order for nine large Puranic paintings was already agreed upon earlier and these paintings had to be delivered before the completion of the Jagan Mohan Palace the coming year.

Ravi Varma's plan was to go to Bombay, Baroda, and Rewa for more portrait commission work during the winter season and at the same time work on the Mysore order. But one day before departure, Raja Varma fell ill, and the journey had to be cancelled.

A letter from the Mysore Palace archives is one of the few authentic documents of that period:

> Mysore 17th November 1904
>
> My Dear Ramakrishna Rao,
>
> Raja Ravi Varma & his brother are leaving this [place] by Mail tomorrow—Sunday 18th November—for Bombay en route to Rewa and I am to inform you to let them have a sum of Rs 2300 as early as possible today. Pending further orders this amount may be debited under 'Advances'. Will you please have this seen to [+++].
>
> The Modikhana & other arrangements made for these may be discontinued after their departure,
>
> Yours sincerely
> [sign.]

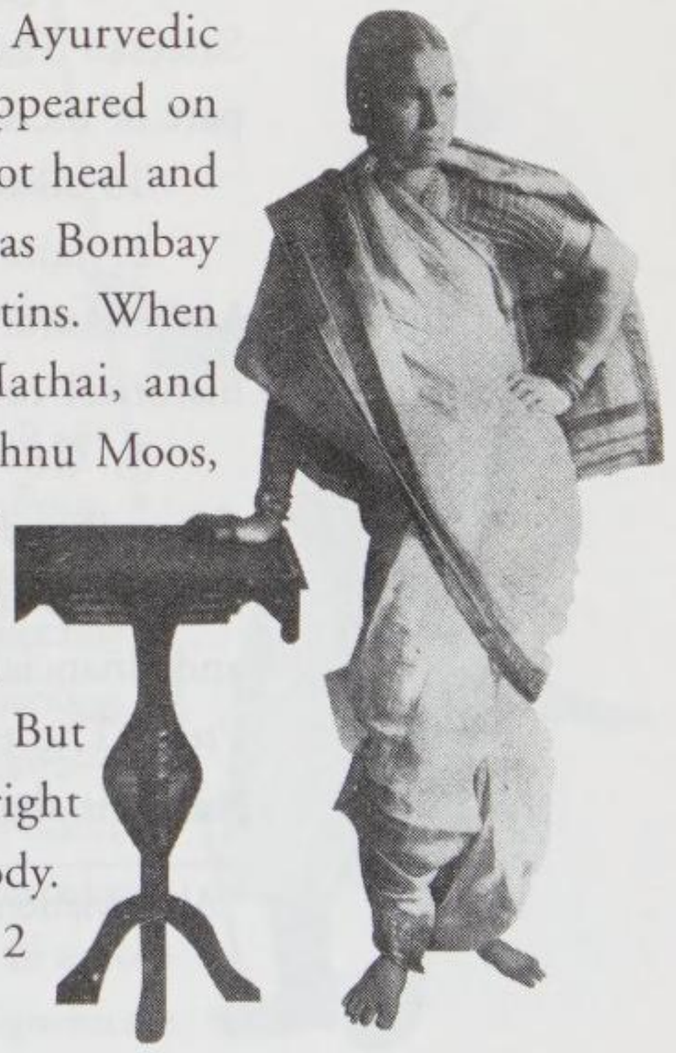
The Varma brothers halted for some time in Bangalore, but when the condition of the younger brother became worse he was removed to Madras where he was operated upon shortly after New Year in 1905 for inflammation of the intestines. He died one day after the operation, on 4 January 1905. His nephew, Rama Varma, the younger son of Ravi Varma, was at his bedside and left an account of the last hours of his uncle. He recounts that his uncle, on his deathbed, regretted not having provided better for his wife Janaki, a Nair lady. Since they had no children, her status in the traditional Nair society was a vulnerable

one.[253] She eventually married C.V. Pillay, the famous author of historical romances, and one of the pioneers of modern Malayali literature.

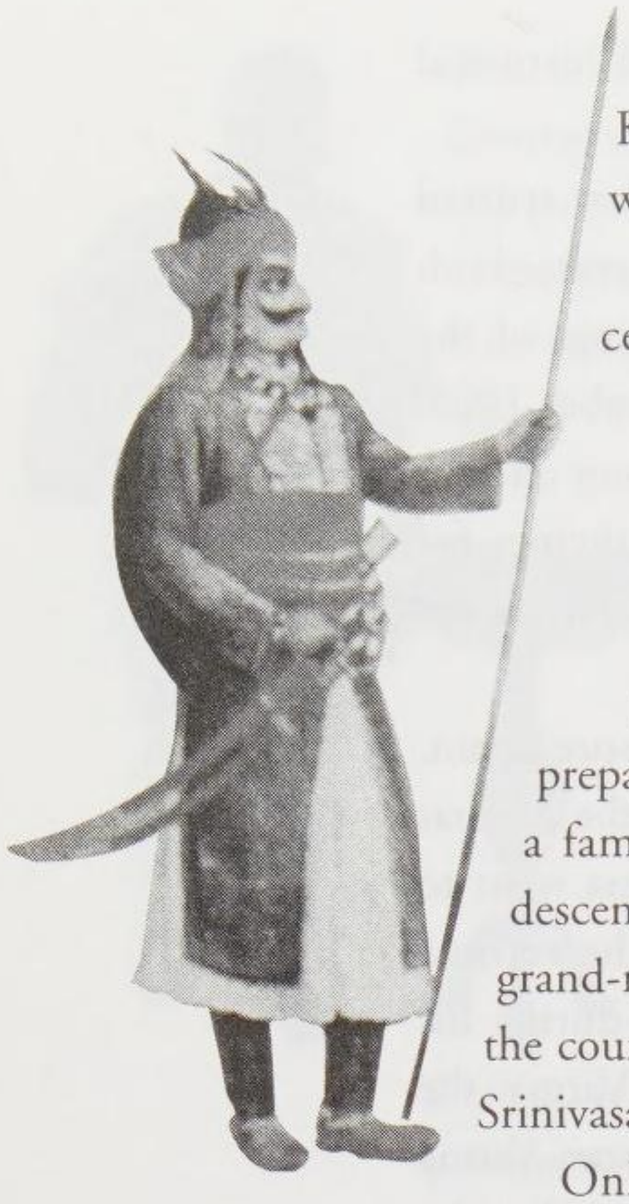
With the death of his brother, Raja Ravi Varma lost his most trusted friend and colleague. In spite of sad occurrences in the very same year—both his brothers died—Ravi Varma worked on the nine Puranic paintings of the Mysore commission, which, by and large, were completed by September 1905. Ravi Varma by that time suffered from an unsteady hand, and his son and his sister were of great help during the work on the paintings. The themes for these nine paintings, now in the Jagan Mohan Palace, were taken from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.[254]

After completion of the paintings, Ravi Varma went to Mysore again. With him were his son Rama Varma who by then was studying in the Madras School of Arts. After placing the paintings in the palace, Ravi Varma went to Madras, but was later recalled by the Maharaja to be part of the retinue accompanying the Prince of Wales—the future King George V—during his forthcoming visit to the state. It was during these days that Rama Varma, the artist son, fell ill with a virulent attack of smallpox. Fortunately, Rama Varma survived this dreaded disease and lived to the age of eighty-six, and when he died in 1966, he was the great old man of art in Kerala.

Raja Ravi Varma joined the retinue of the nobility of which he now was very much a part, and accompanied the camp of the Prince of Wales. Some of his last sketches are of the Khedda operation[255] staged for the Viceroy. One of the paintings shows the huge tents for the participants with a minute motor car in the foreground. It was one of the first cars imported by the state. Ravi Varma returned to Travancore in February 1906. He was by then stricken by diabetes and underwent Ayurvedic treatment.[256] He attended the marriage of his granddaughter Rani Sethu Lakshmibai, the eleven-year-old adopted Senior Rani of Travancore.



In August of the year, during his traditional rejuvenating Ayurvedic treatment, his diabetic condition worsened. A large carbuncle appeared on his shoulder and was finally operated upon. But the wound did not heal and his overall condition worsened. Friends from all over and as far as Bombay came down to Kilimanur, and even the Press gave out health bulletins. When his end[257] came, there were with him Dr Balachandran, Dr Mathai, and Shriram Keshav Joshi, old friends from Bombay. Chirataman Vishnu Moos, Dr Sir Balachandra Krishna, and Dr B.M. Mathai, who were his friends, came to treat Ravi Varma. Two of the best Ayurvedic physicians in Kerala, Chirataman Vishnu Moos and Vasudevan Unni, were appointed by the Maharaja to come to Kilimanur. But they all could not do anything more than putting him, at the right time, on the *dhaba* mat before his last breath went out of his body. His nephew Ravi Varma Raja[258] performed the last rites. It was 2 October 1906 when death finally came.



Only the day before he had put his brush to the painting of Kadambari,[259] and talked with his friend A.K. Joshi about a press which they wanted to set up.

This was Ravi Varma, the portraitist of aristocrats[260] and of the celestial.

Notes*

1. Diary—The diary exists presently only in a copy which was prepared—or instigated to be prepared—by the late Dr Bhaskara Varma, a famous child specialist in Ernakulam. Dr Bhaskara Varma, himself a descendant of the family of Raja Ravi Varma—indeed he was one of the grand-nephews of Raja Ravi Varma—researched the artist's life history. In the course of this work he had the diary of C. Raja Raja Varma copied by S. Srinivasan Potty, an associate of his.

Only two parts of the copies of the diary are known. The first part comprises the entries from 1st January 1895 till 11th July 1903, the second part contains the entries from 15th July 1903 till 1st January 1904.

The diary was copied into a bound calendar for the year 1963, indicating the probable date of the copy-work. For his biography of Ravi Varma, N. Balakrishna Nayar (Nayar, N.B., 1953) could still refer extensively to the original diary, which at that time was with the youngest son of Ravi Varma—Rama Varma 'Painter'. The original diary contained entries till the 9th November 1904, the day when Raja Varma was laid down with a fatal sickness during their consignment in Mysore.

The 'original' copy of the first part of the diary, is presently with the family of the daughter of Dr Bhaskara Varma—Mrs Gayatri Varma and her husband Sateesan Thampuran, who kindly allowed us to take xerox copies. The second part of the copy was made available by Dr Partha Mitter of Sussex University.

To all of them our sincere thanks.

2. Janaki—Wife of Raja Varma. Janaki came from a Nair family of Mavelikara. After Raja Varma's death, she married C.V. Pillay, author of historical romances. (*See* Note 232.)

3. Govardhan Das—Govardhan Das Khatau (alternative spellings Govardhandos, or Govardhan Das Khatas), b. 1865?, son of the scion of the famous cotton trading house of Khatau Makanji of Bombay, was the business and financial partner of Ravi Varma during the early years of the Ravi Varma Press. The partnership was discontinued in 1898 when Ravi Varma bought back his shares.

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* Abbreviations: CRRV — C. Raja Raja Varma
RV—Ravi Varma
Inventory — Inventory of the Library of Ravi Varma in Kilmanur

4. Griffith: John Griffith (1838–1918)—Teacher of decorative painting in the J.J. School of Arts. He was a lifelong friend of Lockwood Kipling and godfather of Rudyard Kipling. He was one of the most influential art teachers of that period.

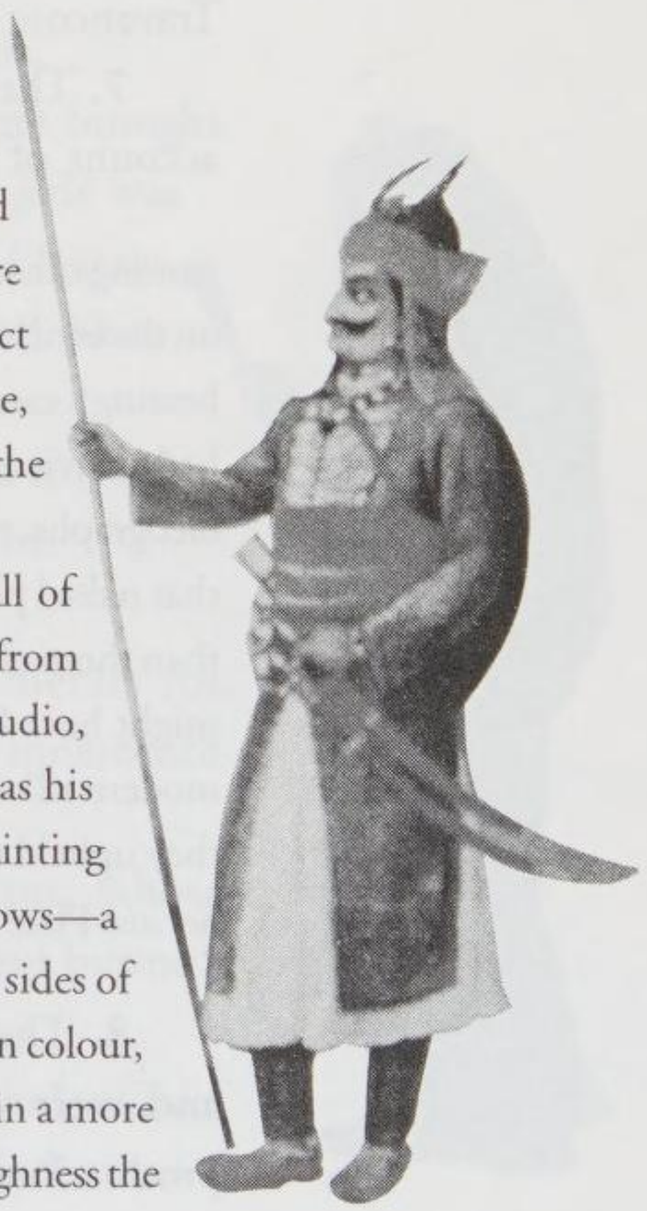
The Varma brothers visited Griffith in the J.J. School of Arts in Bombay during their journey with Prince Martanda Varma in 1895, when Griffith showed them his most famous painting *Temple Steps* which was unfavourably reviewed by Raja Varma: '...poor in colour, poor in execution, and poor in design' (*see* Note 5). The painting is presently at the Bhavnagar Palace (CRRV, 1896: 26).

5. J.J. School of Arts—Named after its founder Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy (J.J.) Industrial School of Arts, founded in 1858 for training in art and crafts, later became the College of Fine Arts, Bombay.

The J.J. School was founded to improve Indian industrial and crafts products, to help find their place in the internal and external market. Many of the craftsmen trained here found employment in decorating the orientalizing buildings, which were to be raised in Bombay around 1900. Also many of the important Indian painters and sculptors of the twentieth century took their training in the J.J. School.

Raja Varma left an account of the visit to the School in his 'Tour in Upper India' (*See* Note 6 for full title):

> On the morning of the 5th January 1895, we spent an hour very usefully at the School of Arts, which owes its existence to the munificence of Sri Jamsethji Jejibhai, the first Parsee Baronet. [Through] his wide charities, which are remarkably free from sectarianism, he made his name a household word in western India. The prince was received at the porch by Mr Griffiths, the Superintendent, who had since our visit after a long and noble connection with the institution, retired from service and had gone home most likely for good. The entrance hall of this temple of art was a pantheon of Greek and Roman gods and goddesses. Imitations in plaster of paris from the antique were arranged all round the walls. Here stood 'Venus de Medici' 'the statue that enchants the world', there 'Apollo Belvedere', a wonderful combination of 'serene majesty, sublime intellect and physical beauty'; at one corner reclined Theseus of giant power, with his nose, hands and feet broken off; in another stood the remnants of an Antonius, the embodiment of perfect manly beauty.
>
> We inspected in turn the modelling, drawing and painting classes, in all of which a number of students, including a few Parsee girls, were working, some from models, others from still life. Mr Griffith next kindly took us to his own studio, hung round with sketches and studies in all stages of finish. On a big easel was his 'chef d'oeuvre', the 'Temple Steps', in a beautifully carved blackwood frame, a painting on which he had bestowed much labour and time. It represents—as the title shows—a flight of steps leading up to a temple with a number of beggars ranged on both sides of them, and some Hindu women doling out handfuls of rice to them. It was poor in colour, poor in execution, and poor in design. We have seen a similar subject handled in a more masterly way by Mr Van Ruith, and the painting is now in the possession of His Highness the



Maharaja Gaekwar. In course of conversation Mr Griffith complained that his students did well as long as they were in the school, but when they left it they became too lazy to make any strenuous effort to attain distinction. But I think the fault lies not so much in themselves as in their want of means to the attainment of the desired end. There is nothing to stimulate them to exertion and fire their imagination. What they want is national art galleries in the Presidency towns, with good collections of works of acknowledged merit, representing different schools, ancient and modern, where they might copy and draw their inspiration for something higher than the dusky faces devoid of all feeling and expression with which our art exhibitions are crowded. Before we left the school we paid a visit, in the company of the Superintendent, to the workshops opened by Lord Reay, that most popular of Bombay Governors, who, during his administration had given a true impetus to technical education in the Presidency. Engraving, casting and enamelling on metals, pottery, carpentry and carpet weaving were some of the industries thought there. We were surprised and pleased to see puny Hindu lads handling their instruments with a dexterity and precision that would have put grown up men to shame. Mr Griffith told us that Hindu lads generally have a good eye for the beautiful, and if only trained, were capable of doing things better than even European lads. We returned home with the feeling that we could not have spent the morning in a more useful or pleasant way. (CRRV, 1896: 26–7.)

6. H.H.—His Highness the Second Prince of Travancore, Martanda Varma. He was on a tour through India with the Varma brothers and a retinue of fifteen people. The tour lasted six months from 18 November 1894 till 17 May 1895 and brought them to Madras, Bombay, Baroda, Jaipur, Agra, Delhi, Benares, Calcutta, and Darjeeling and back again to Trivandrum. The diary of Raja Varma was most probably begun as a preliminary to a travelogue of this journey which later appeared in manuscript form for private circulation under the title 'A Narrative of the Tour in Upper India of His Highness Prince Martanda Varma of Travancore (henceforth 'Tour in Upper India'). (CRRV, 1896.)

7. The Bombay High Court was visited and Raja Varma left a memorable account of it in his 'Tour in Upper India':

> Among other public buildings visited, was the High Court, where the Prince was given a seat on the bench between the Hon. Mr Justice Jardine and the Hon. Mr Justice Ranade, who were hearing a case of an interesting nature. It was an appeal from the City Magistrate of Poona who had convicted the accused for having sold obscene pictures which were cheap German oleographs, representing nude figures of females. The judges were, it appears, of the opinion that naked pictures of classical subjects were not obscene, in that the artist had higher ideals than those of merely exciting the sensual appetites of the spectators. The pictures in question might have been classed among them, had it not been for the introduction into them of modern silk umbrellas and apparel, which divested them of their idealism. For this reason, they upheld the decision of the lower Court and dismissed the appeal. (CRRV, 1896: 20–1; *See also* Plate 32.)

8. The Varma brothers were frequenting the Bombay theatres regularly and were quite informed about the merits and shortcomings of different productions. Theatrical aesthetics are obviously one of the strongest elements

in Ravi Varma's paintings, and it is clear that there is a strong current of influence of the theatre on Ravi Varma's art.

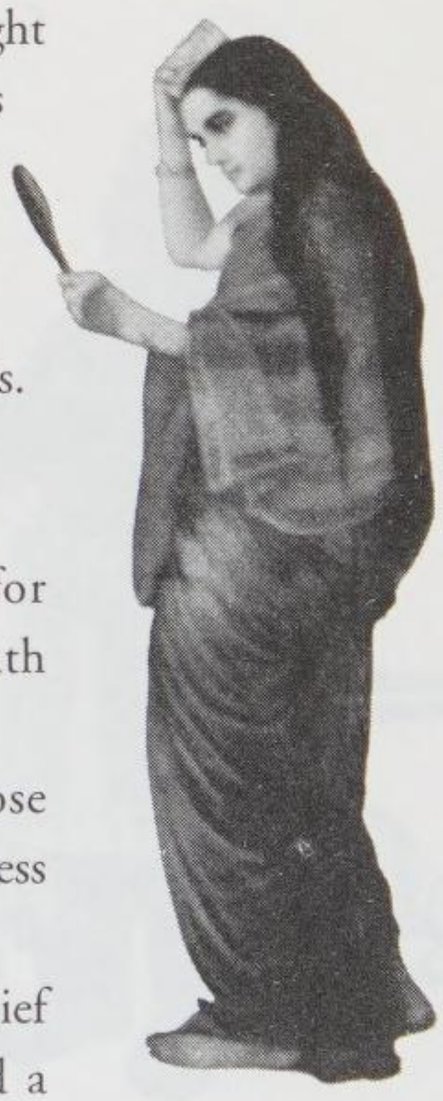
Raja Varma gives a vivid account of their participation in the theatrical life of Bombay in his 'Tour in Upper India':

> On fine moonlight [*sic*] nights we used to spend occasionally an hour or two in the theaters, of which there are five or six to suit the tastes and means of all classes. At the 'Tivoli Theater', which was attended largely by Europeans, we witnessed a highly successful performance of Sheridan's masterpiece, the 'School of Scandal', by the London Lyric Company. The 'Novelty', where the Parsee Victoria Company, one of the best native troupes, had on the boards their new opera of 'Harischandra', [which] was drawing monster houses. The play was in Hindustani, and was so successful that it was having a run of several nights. The acting, singing and scenery were far above those of ordinary native play-houses. The story, as every one knows, beautifully illustrates the moral that truth triumphs in the end. We followed with thrilling interest the woes and trials of that truth loving king Harischandra, who, to keep inviolate his word, sold his kingdom, wife, son, and himself, and became slave to a pariah. The plot thickens and even greater misfortunes overtake the unfortunate king, culminating at last in his being forced to cut off the head of his dear wife with his own hand, when the god Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, with all the minor attendant powers appear on the scene, and in the midst of tears of the audience the drop scene falls. The Gujrati-play-going public patronized the 'Gaiety', opposite the Victoria Terminus, while at Grant Road, Kirloskar's beautiful rendering of 'Shakuntala' was being liberally supported by the Mahrattas, notwithstanding the stifling heat and smell of gas in the ill-ventilated 'Ripon Theater'. 'Shakuntala' was for years the rage of the country of Maharashtra. There are three or four other theaters in the same locality, but they are frequented only by the sharpers and roughs of the gambling dens and slums of the city. (CRRV, 1896: 23) (*See also* Notes 233 and 239).

9. Durbar—Court assembly.

10. Nautch—Dance performance by professional dancing-girls.

Tanjore Girls—Gori and Khandimati, two dance-girls who were brought from Tanjore to the court of Baroda. A life-size statue of the two girls was prepared by the Italian sculptor Felici and is still housed in the Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum in Baroda (*see also* Diary 23 April 1903 and Note 212; *see also* Plate 39C). (Catalogue 1981: 8).



11. Cheetah hunt—Hunt in which the game is chased by trained leopards.

12. Bullock tonga—Two-wheeled passenger cart drawn by oxen.

13. Gaikwar—Title of the Maratha kings of Baroda.

14. Silver and gold guns—Guns made of the respective metals for ceremonial purposes by the eccentric Maharaja Malharao in the nineteenth century.

15. Jain Temple—Temple of the ancient religion of the Jains, whose members are particularly numerous and well-off in Gujarat's trade and business circles.

16. Seth Lachman Das, C.I.E (Companion of the Indian Empire)—Chief of a large banking house with business interests all over northern India and a

seat in the lieutenant governor's council at Allahabad (*see also* Plate 10 A).

17. Mayo College—College founded in 1872 in Ajmer, Rajasthan in memory of Lord Mayo, exclusively for the offspring of the Rajput royalty. Here the princes learned in style and under the close tutelage of British teachers. The individual states maintained separate houses on the college campus, including stables (*see also* Diary 25 August 1902).

18. Ana Sagar and Dargah—An ancient artificial lake at the outskirts of the city.

Dargah—Tomb and Sanctuary of a Muslim saint, one of the most important and largest Islamic sanctuaries in India.

19. Cantonment—British army establishment and officers' residences, usually situated one mile off the native towns.

20. Ghaut—A flight of steps into a river or tank, used by Indians for ablutions and bathing as well as for cremation. Also denotes a general descent in a mountainous landscape. The mountain chains running at the western and eastern fringes of the Indian subcontinent are therefore similarly known as 'Ghauts'.

21. Krishna—One of the incarnations of God Vishnu. Mathura is, since early historic times, a centre of Krishna worship. Indeed, some of the earliest depictions of Vaishnava gods were found from ancient mounds in the vicinity of the city.

22. Vasant—The spring.

23. Holi—Spring festival, in northern India celebrated by pouring or jetting colour over passers-by and singing songs.

24. Shradh—Memorial day for an ancestor, celebrated according to customs for a particular number of years.

25. Brindhaban—Place related to the boyhood of God Krishna.

26. Ranganath—One of the many names of Krishna.

27. Iyengars—A particular caste of Brahmins from south India.

28. Puja—Religious service.

29. Govind Dev—One of the names of God Krishna.

30. Channu—Buckwheat.

31. Gopas—Cowherds, friends of Krishna.

32. Sikandra—Tomb of the Mughal ruler Akbar.

33. Diwan-i-Khas—Hall of private audiences.

34. Itmad-ud-daulah—Tomb of Mirza Ghuyas Beg, father of Nur Jahan.

35. Sirdar—High-ranking officer.

36. Howda—Seat fastened to the back of elephants for the transport of persons.

37. Scindias—Name of the ruling (Maratha) family of the state of Gwalior.

38. Lashkar—Camp; new town of Gwalior.

39. Alwar—A small princely state west of Gwalior, in Rajputana.

40. Fort— The Red Fort; large fortified palace city, central seat of the Mughal power in Delhi.

Dewan-i-Am—The hall of public audiences, here mistaken for the place where the peacock throne was placed. This famous jewel-studded throne was placed in the Dewan-i-Khas, the hall of private audiences.

Jumma Masjid—Jama Masjid, the great Mughal mosque of Delhi.

Chandni Chowk—Main axis and thoroughfare of Old Delhi.

41. Kutab Minar (Qutab Minar)—A 70m-high tower of victory built in AD 1193 by one of the early Muslim kings of Delhi, Qutub-ud-Din.

42. Mutiny—Began with the rebellion of Indian troops employed by the British East India Company in January 1857 in Barrackpore. The initial cause for discontent was the introduction of greased cartridges for the new guns. Soon all the large cantonment cities up to Delhi were taken by Indian troops and the English civil and military residents were either taken prisoner or slaughtered. The backlash came with the arrival of fresh European troops and Indian troops loyal to the East India Company from north-western India. The uprising was broken by the middle of 1858. In November, the East India Company was abolished and India placed under the direct rule of the British government.

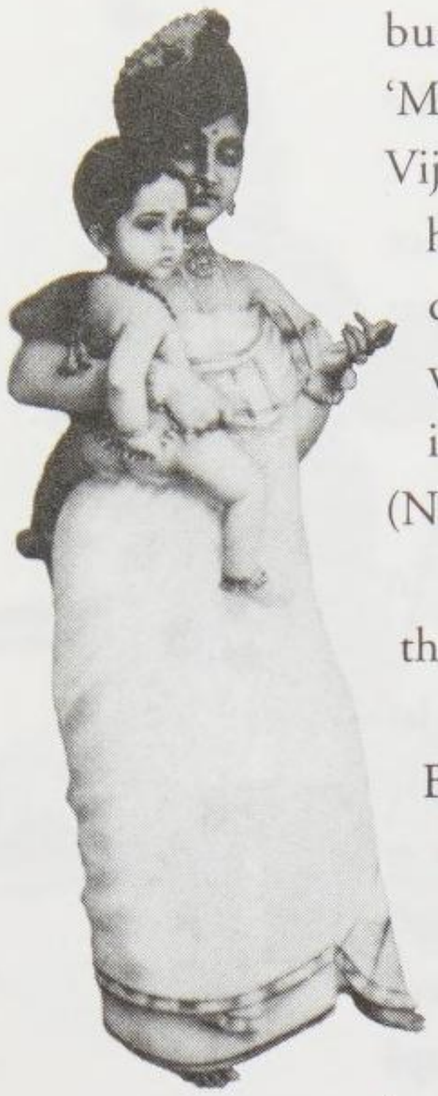
43. Residency—During the Mutiny of 1857, the British Residency in Lucknow—a large complex of buildings—was besieged for eighty-seven days by Indian troops supporting the uprising, before a detachment under Sir Havelock could break through the siege. The siege continued for another month-and-a-half and the Europeans amassed inside the Residency suffered terribly under the cannonades of the enemies as well as from hunger and disease. The shelled remains of the Residency were retained as a monument of British suzerainty over India as long as it lasted; afterwards, it was transformed into a monument of the struggle for national independence by the government of free India.

44. Sir H. Havelock—Major Gen. Sir Henry Havelock (1795–1857), commander of a relief column which broke through to the besieged Residency of Lucknow during the 1857 Mutiny, where he also died shortly after the final relief.

45. Chowk—Bazaar area.

46. Mosque—Babri Masjid, a large domed mosque which was erected by Babur (b. 1483), the earliest of the Mughal emperors in the sixteenth century. The mosque became the centre of a heated controversy between Muslims and Hindus during the British period, when the worship of either community was stalled to pacify the situation. The Masjid became the focal point in the propaganda of chauvinist communal Hindu parties and was razed to the ground by a frenzied mob in December 1992.

47. Vijayanagaram—Originally a zamindari near Vizagapatnam. The different branches of the family had wide



business interests all over India. Ravi Varma was the guest of one of the 'Maharajas' of Vijayanagaram who had built a new palace in Varanasi. The Vijayanagaram Maharaja was also a guest of Ravi Varma in Bombay and caused him considerable embarrassment when he took the reigns from his coachmen, drove the carriage in his drunken state recklessly through the Bombay streets, whipping policemen who thought it their duty to interfere. He finally landed in jail, where Ravi Varma had to pull all strings available to calm the scandal (Nayar, N.B., 1953: 152–3).

48. Shivratri—The night of Shiva. One of the main Shaivite festivals during the winter season.

49. Vishveshwar or Vishwanath Temple—One of the main temples in Benares, dedicated to god Shiva-Vishveshwar, Lord of the Universe. Due to its gilt spire, it is also known as the Golden Temple.

50. Darshan—The worshippers' contact with the deity, seeing and being seen by the image of the deity.

51. Malayalees—Persons whose mother-tongue is Malayalam, the language spoken in Kerala.

52. Varuna and Asi—These two tributaries to the Ganges form the boundaries of the ancient area of Varanasi/Benares.

53. Chatram—Pilgrims' resting-place, a pavilion.

54. Dufferin Bridge—Railway and road bridge over River Ganga, the only bridge over the Ganga at that time.

55. Manikarnika Ghaut—One of the main cremation ghats in Benaras.

56. Venu Madhava and Bhairava—Horrid forms of God Shiva.

57. Bhavani and Karri Bai—Forms of the Goddess Durga.

58. Vishnupad and Akshayavat—Two of the famous pilgrim places in the vicinity of Gaya. Vishnupad is the footprint of God Vishnu now enshrined in the temple of the same name, Akshayavat is the eternal Banyan tree.

59. Sakhya Sinha—Shakya Muni, the sage from the Shakya clan, the Buddha.

60. Peepul tree—*Ficus religiosa*, a huge tree with heart-shaped leaves, revered by the Buddhists since Gautama the Buddha found enlightenment meditating under this tree.

61. Dispute between the Mahant and Dharmapala—Buddhism—although originating in India—was almost forgotten not only as a living religion but also as a philosophical concept. It was only in the nineteenth century that the original sources and texts were again researched and interpreted. At the end of the century, an intellectual revival of Indian philosophy took place, not only in (Hindu) India but also in Ceylon, where Buddhism was still practised. It was the Buddhist monk Angarika Dharmapala who spearheaded a political revival of Buddhism in British India. He wanted to bring the major pilgrim centres related to the different stations of the Buddha under the guardianship of the newly formed Mahabodhi Society. Since the Buddhist monuments relating to different events in the spiritual life of the Buddha were under the

management of the Mahant of the Vishnu Temple in Gaya, and the Gaya Temple was the largest landholder in India—almost the whole of the present state of Bihar was under its ownership—there was considerable resistance to the worship of a Buddha image which the Dharmapala installed inside the ancient pagoda at Bodh Gaya. The whole affair was extremely politicized and took an ugly turn when hoodlums of the Mahant attacked Buddhist monks with clubs in the Burmese pilgrims' rest house. The case of the ownership of the temple and claims for the right of worship went on for many years in Indian and British courts, till a fragile settlement was reached more than half a century later in 1949.

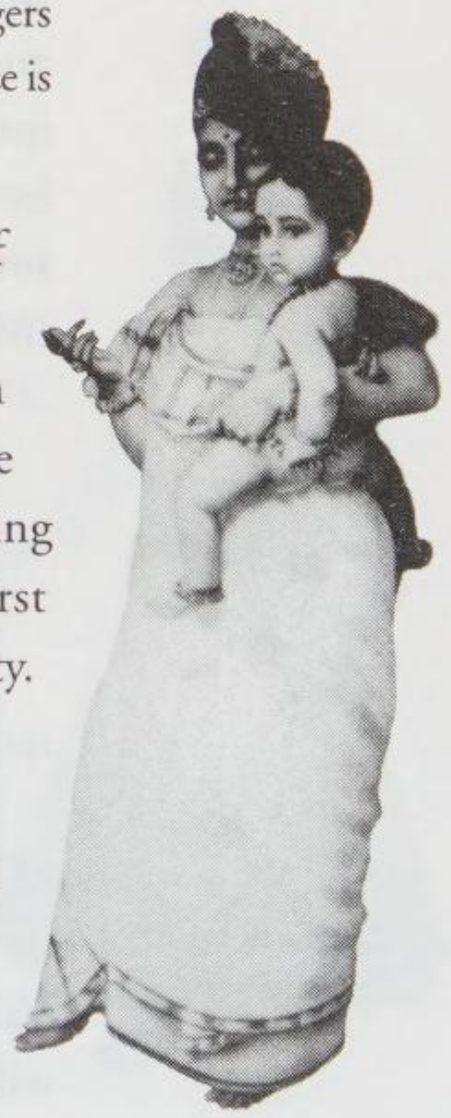
Angarika Dharmapala participated in the Parliament of Religions which took place during the great World Exhibition in Chicago in 1893, where Ravi Varma's paintings were exhibited as well (Barua, D.K., 1981).

62. Museum—Indian Museum, Calcutta. Raja Varma gives a short account of the archaeological section in his 'Tour in Upper India', which is more interesting as it is one of the rare instances where he gives his opinion on ancient art. It is not surprising that he values Gandhara art the most:

> The museum stands facing this beautiful plain [of the Maidan]. It is a massif quadrangular building with colossal columns and a court in the middle. Although the Geology, Mineralogy, and Natural History department were all interesting, the Archaeology Section had the greatest charm for us. Remnants of broken columns, friezes and sculpture, have been gathered together from all parts of the country and arranged in excellent order. Hindu divinities, Buddhas and Jains, some horribly maimed and mutilated, sat side by side, as if forgetting old race-hatred and jealousies. We observed a strong family resemblance between the image of Buddha and the Tirthankaras of the Jainas, and we could not but be struck with the delicacy of execution, and the wonderful approach to life, exhibited by some pieces of sculpture, known as the Gandhara collection, brought from the Punjab and the neighborhood of Peshawar. There was the stamp of the genuine artist in them. The graceful arrangement of drapery, and the pose of the fingers were remarkably fine. It is the opinion of archaeologists that this high standard of excellence is due to Greek influence on Indian Art (CRRV, 1896: 79).

63. Lepchas and Bootias—Tibetans—the former are inhabitants of Sikkim, the latter of Bhutan.

64. Parsee—Follower of the Zoroastrian religion, originally a Persian community which migrated to India in the twelfth century. During the nineteenth century, Parsee traders and entrepreneurs rose to a commanding position in the business and banking circles of Bombay. Many of the first modern capitalist industrialists in western India belonged to that community.



65. Dharamshala—Rest house for pilgrims and travellers.

66. Akshya Veta—The undying tree.

Banyan tree—*Ficus indicus*, with oval-shaped leaves. The tree is sacred to the Hindus and, in many temple compounds, individual trees can be seen covering spaces of a hectare or more with their wide outloading crown supported by pillar-like areal roots.

67. Pan-supari—Party where areca nut, tobacco, and/or honey and other spices (supari)—according to taste—rolled into the leaf of a cultivated creeper plant (pan) is chewed. A pan-supari could be compared to a cocktail party in Europe. Pan (betel leaf) is mildly intoxicating.

68. Ghaut scenery—The railway line crossing the Western Ghats, tunnelling crags and bridging deep gorges, is breathtakingly picturesque.

69. Grigg, the British Resident—H.B. Grigg, for twelve years head of the education department of the southern Presidency, later British Resident in Trivandrum. Ravi Varma had discussed the scheme for the establishment of an art gallery in Trivandrum, an idea which originated—according to RV—with Grigg. Ravi Varma finally proposed this scheme to the government in Travancore, and produced several paintings for this future art gallery between 1896 and 1901 (Kerala State Archives, 1994: 180–2; Letters Archive, 1896) (*See* Chronology 1896).

British Resident—Officer of the Imperial British administration, guarding and interpreting British interests in territories of native rulers.

70. Riot—There was a riot in Palakod in the Salem district but the year was 1891. This was one of the worst periods of Hindu–Muslim communal relations. Murderous and barbaric riots also took place in Bombay in 1893, which lasted for six days. Ravi Varma had in his collection several photographs of Bombay held down by large contingents of English soldiers with trains of heavy artillery guns obviously quelling a riot in the city (*see also* Plate 51).

Communal disturbances grew in volume and frequency during 1885–1900. The reasons were directly connected with the formulation of nationalist causes, for which mobs were recruited on communal and religious lines. In northern India, the anti-cow slaughter movement served, in many cases, as the spark into the communal tinder box, and in western India, particularly in Bombay and Poona, riots erupted regularly during the Ganapati festival. Looting and destruction of mosques and temples was a common occurrence. The introduction of the Ganapati festival as a national festival of the Maratha people by Tilak was one of the main causes of communal riots, and left annually several people killed and communal harmony under considerable stress (Majumdar, R.C., 1981: 326–8).

71. Kovilakam—Rest house.

72. Zamorin—The title of the king of Calicut, meaning 'Lord of the Seas'.

73. Tahsildar—Head officer of a subdivision (tahsil) of a district.

74. Bolghatty—Palace on Bolgatti Island in the lagoon off Ernakulam.

75. Mavelikara—The Kilimanur and the Mavelikara lineages exchanged spouses. Ravi Varma's wife came from the Mavelikara lineage.

76. Kilimanur—The Varma brothers' maternal court, about 50 km north of Trivandrum.

77. Senior Rani—Rani Lakshmibai (?–15 June 1901), wife of Kerala Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran. She adopted the two granddaughters of Ravi Varma's wife to continue her lineage.

78. Venku—Brahmin servant of Raja Varma, a dependant of the royal court of Travancore.

In the retinue of Ravi Varma were several servants in the hierarchical and caste order of a traditional Hindu household. Known by name is also the Sudra servant Ayappan (*see also* Diary 27 May 1901, 3 September 1902).

79. Grant for the Art Gallery—Ravi Varma had since long nourished the desire to found an art gallery in Travancore, an idea which he shared with the British resident H.B. Grigg (*see* Note 69). After Grigg's death in 1895, he again took up the idea in earnest with the then Dewan Shungrasoobyer, who himself wrote the initial letter to the Maharaja after a discussion with the artist in December 1895. The letters of Ravi Varma and Shungrasoobyer are documents on art as a political instrument of public instruction, a function which, to a considerable degree, was enforced on the native states:

From:
Ravi Varma AVL.,
Koil Thampuran of Kilimanur

To:
S. Shungrasoobyer Avergal,
Diwan of Travancore
Trivandrum 31st August, 1895.

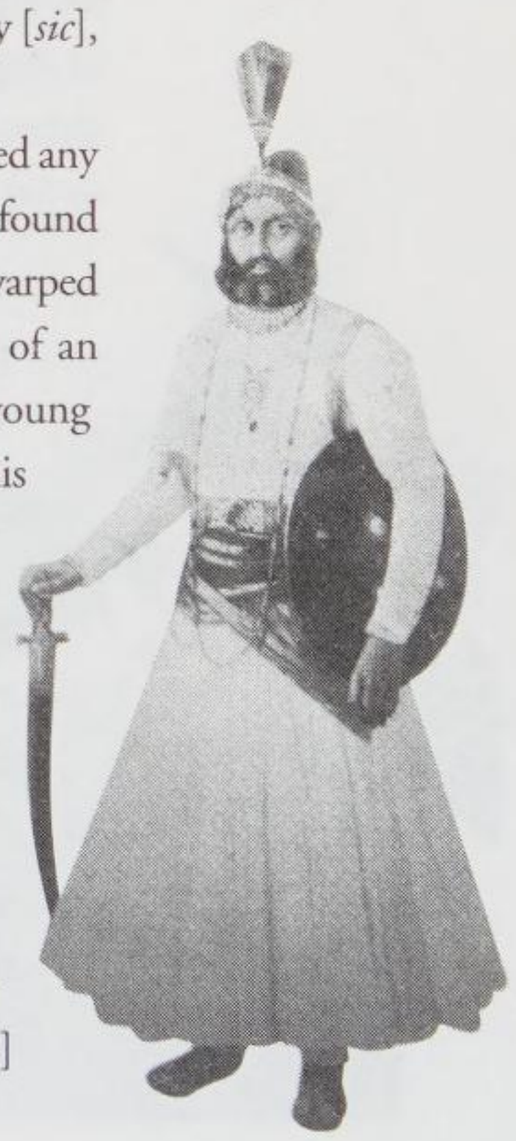
Sir,

I beg permission to submit to you for the consideration of Government a scheme for the establishment of an Art Gallery in Trivandrum—a scheme which originated with the late Mr Grigg, the British Resident, who, if God had only spared him, would have elaborated and proposed it to Government himself. May, he had, as you are well aware, given it the start by giving me an order for a number of paintings for the Residency [*sic*], but unfortunately it fell through on his death.

The educational and historical importance of pictures is too well known to need any but a brief allusion. In Travancore there is a greater talent for the Fine Arts than I have found in any part of India. But from want of due encouragement from the State, it is early warped and prevented from coming to the light of day. Nothing stimulates the genius of an aspiring young art student, so much as seeing and copying a good work of art. A young man who has received an elementary knowledge of drawing can achieve much by his acquaintance with and the study of the works of good artists.

It is patent to all that a wider cultivation of the artistic talent of the country will exercise its influence on the local industries and manufactures.

To what are the triumphs of art achieved by the European countries due, but their art schools and galleries? We see the Stamp of true artistic genius in all articles of European manufacture. A great writer says 'wherever the arts are cultivated with success, they almost imperceptibly educate the general taste and make politeness of mind keep pace with refinement of manners'. An art gallery therefore for such an advanced State as Travancore is a necessity which can [no] longer be ignored.



The historical importance of pictures is difficult to over-estimate. They throw as much light on the men and manners of a period as any amount of written record[s]. How much poorer are we today for want of truthful pictures of the early ages of Travancore history. I have not the slightest doubt that a good gallery of paintings will be an invaluable aid to future historians of Travancore.

Since the commencement of the reign of His Highness, our illustrious Maharaja, the State has entered upon an era of progress, it has never known before. While every department of education has received an impetus the Fine Arts alone have been treated with a neglect which, in this enlightened age, it does not deserve. The neglect becomes all the more glaring, especially in the eyes of an outsider, when it takes into consideration that the country does not lack the talent for it.

All the capitals and even provincial towns of the countries of Europe possess picture galleries which have cost millions of pounds. Every year the Governments of these countries, buy a certain number of the best paintings from the various Art Exhibitions, to replenish their galleries and encourage promising artists.

For an instance nearer home I wish to cite Baroda. His Highness, the Gaikwar, possesses a collection of paintings and statuary that is the admiration of every visitor to the State. The Maharaja has systematically set about getting painted his ancestors, ministers and Political Agents. His gallery can boast of a large number of works of noted European and native artists. My paintings alone number nearly fifty. The Gaikwar has been increasing his collection year by year, by the purchase of new pictures from Europe and from Indian Art Exhibitions. Even the little State, Bhavnagar in Khathyawar, has a collection of paintings which all Travancore does not possess.

It is worthy of the serious consideration of the Government of His Highness the Maharaja that such a progressive State as Travancore which contains much more indigenous talent, should be left behind them in this particular matter. For this reason I trust the proposal I have the honor to submit, will receive the due attention and support from you.

Should the Government be pleased to entrust me with the task of forming an art collection in Trivandrum, I shall execute it to its best satisfaction. I beg leave to propose to Government to lay out every year a certain amount of money for the purchase of such paintings as I shall recommend to them. I shall take the greatest care that they are only works of acknowledged merit by well-known artists. The gallery should contain portraits, historical and social paintings, landscapes and statues.

I think it is a matter of great historical importance to reproduce the portraits of the ancient Maharajas, Diwans and Residents as can be done with the help of the materials now available. Mr Grigg had suggested to me the necessity of preserving the likeness of the eminent personages of Travancore.

The hanging[,] effective arrangement and preservation of the collection shall rest with me. I shall from time to time prepare catalogues of the works with their particulars for the use of the Government and the public. The cleaning, varnishing and framing shall be duly attended to and reported to Government.

I have the honor to be

Sir,

Your most obedient servant

RAVI VARMA

Koil Thampuran of Kilimanur.

The Dewan proposed this project to the Maharaja at the end of the year and Ravi Varma 'placed before the Government 4 Subjects for painting as a beginning for the proposed Picture Gallery at Trivandrum' (ArchivesTrivandrum b 7059). This letter gives a glimpse of Ravi Varma's self-consciousness and his art:

Kilimanur

26 November 1896

To:

S. Shungrasoobyer F.M.U.

Dewan

Trivandrum

My dear Sir,

Agreeably to our conversation of the other day I have the pleasure to place before you four subjects for painting as a beginning for the proposed Picture Gallery at Trivandrum.

I think we cannot do better than begin with classical subjects as they appear to the feelings and understanding of the Hindu Mythology as offering a wide field for the exercise of their talents. It is therefore nothing but just that a Hindu Government like that of His Highness our enlightened Maharaja should extend its patronage to me, a native of the soil, before I am too old to work. My late uncle's Diksha which I am performing has doomed me to spend the next twelve month[s] at home. I hope therefore to be able to finish the four paintings, of which a list is herein enclosed in the course of the year, should I get at an early date the sanction of the Government to take the work in hand. My charges are according to the difficulty of treatment of the subjects, the number of figures they contain and the sizes of the canvases. Hoping the matter will not fail to receive your earliest attention

I beg to remain

My dear Sir

your most obedient

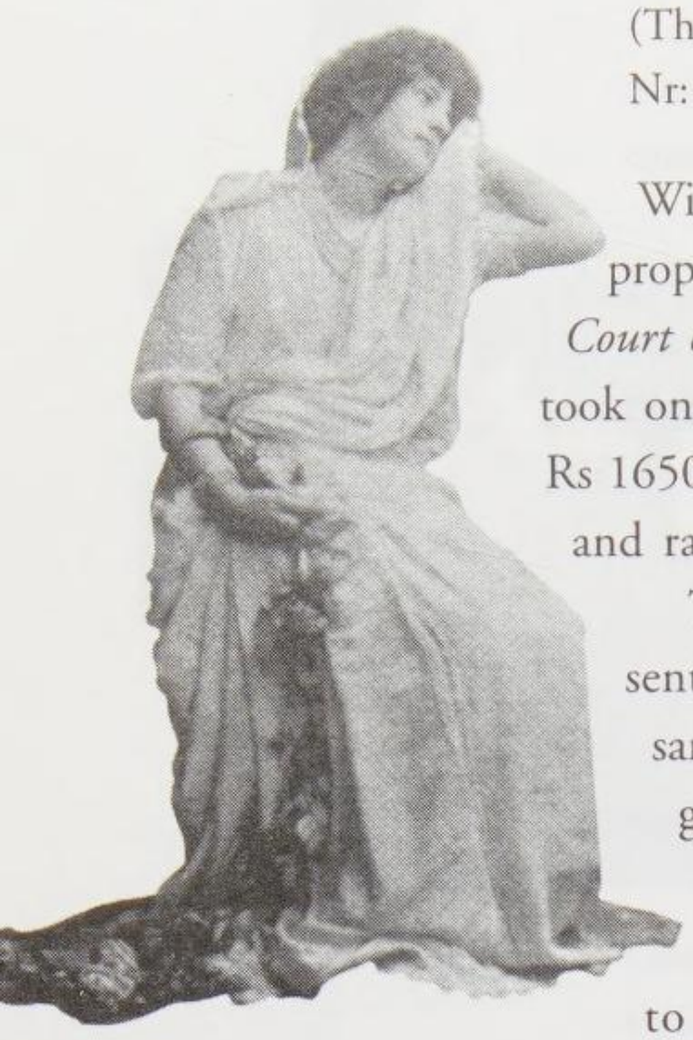
RAVI VARMA

(1) *The Brave Kusumavati*
A group consisting of more than
ten figures 5 ½ feet x 4 — 1500

(2) *Draupadi at the Court of Virata*
A group of more than ten[?] figures 5 ½ x 4 — 1500

(3) *Damayanti and the Hamsa or Swan* 4 ½ x 3 ½ — 1000

(4) *Shakuntala assailed by a Wasp calls the King to help her*
4 ½ x 3 ½ — 1000



(The Archive Trivandrum: Art gallery painting of pictures for the same; Archive Nr: C–7059).

Within only a few days' time 'The Maharaja was pleased to consider the proposal favourably' and requested RV to have the subject *Draupadi at the Court of Virata* painted at the figure named by him, viz., Rs 1500. It almost took one year for the painting to be finished and the price then was stated as Rs 1650, 'excess is said to be due on account of an elaborate gilt frame, packing and railway-charges' (Letter of 12 November 1897).

This addition to the price of the painting caused a few memos being sent between the finance department and the Dewan, but the price was sanctioned within a few days and the future outlay for the proposed art gallery was raised to include future framing and transport charges. The paintings were housed at the School of Arts.

The letter mentioned by CRRV on 26 May 1898 was addressed to Dewan Bahadur K. Krishna Swami Rao, Dewan of Travancore, requesting to know 'what amount Government will be pleased to sanction for the Art Gallery for the year 1899 so that I [RV] may begin the work without further delay'.

The amount sanctioned was Rs 2300 for two paintings, this time including the frames. The paintings executed were ready in July 1899 and the subjects were 'Rugamangada and Mohini and Damayanti and Hamsa'. The price for the former was Rs 1300, the latter was Rs 700 only, the price for the frames was Rs 170 and Rs 130 respectively.

In this way, all the subjects proposed at first were painted by 1899, but no building for the proposed art gallery was made available. There is no documentary evidence from after 1899 on the proposed gallery. A painting gallery was established in Trivandrum only in 1935, long after Ravi Varma's death, but with his paintings as the prime attraction.

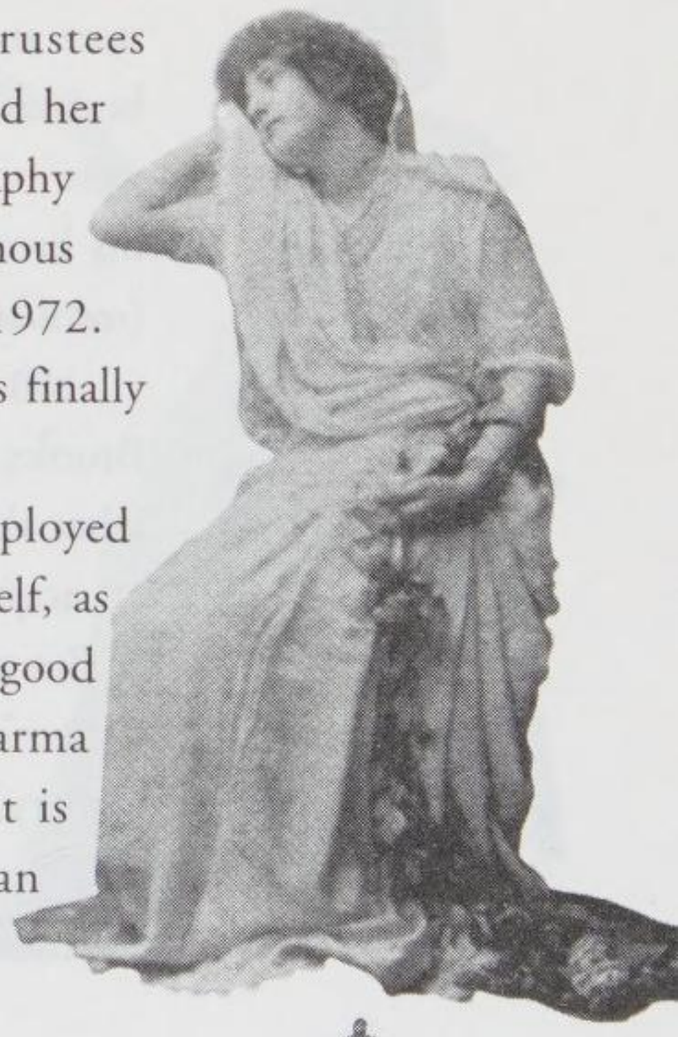
80. Brooks—Frank Brooks, English painter whom Ravi Varma had commissioned to paint *Lady with a Fan*. The painting is an excellent life-size portrait of Rajibai, one of the models of Ravi Varma in Bombay. The painting was most probably done in 1894. It is possible that Ravi Varma commissioned the painting to be able to observe a European painter in posing and arranging the model. The photograph of Rajibai posing for the painting survived in one collection (*see also* Plate 18A, B, C, D). Frank Brooks seems to have been popular as a court painter in the native courts of Saurashtra, particularly in Bhavnagar and Junagadh, since many portraits of his are still on display in the respective art collections.

81. Plague—Since 1896, cases of suspected bubonic plague were reported in Bombay and Poona. From 1897, the disease took epidemic proportions, particularly in Bombay. The British administration countered the disease with far-reaching quarantine measures, which were more burdensome for the harassed population than useful in arresting the epidemic. The nationalist

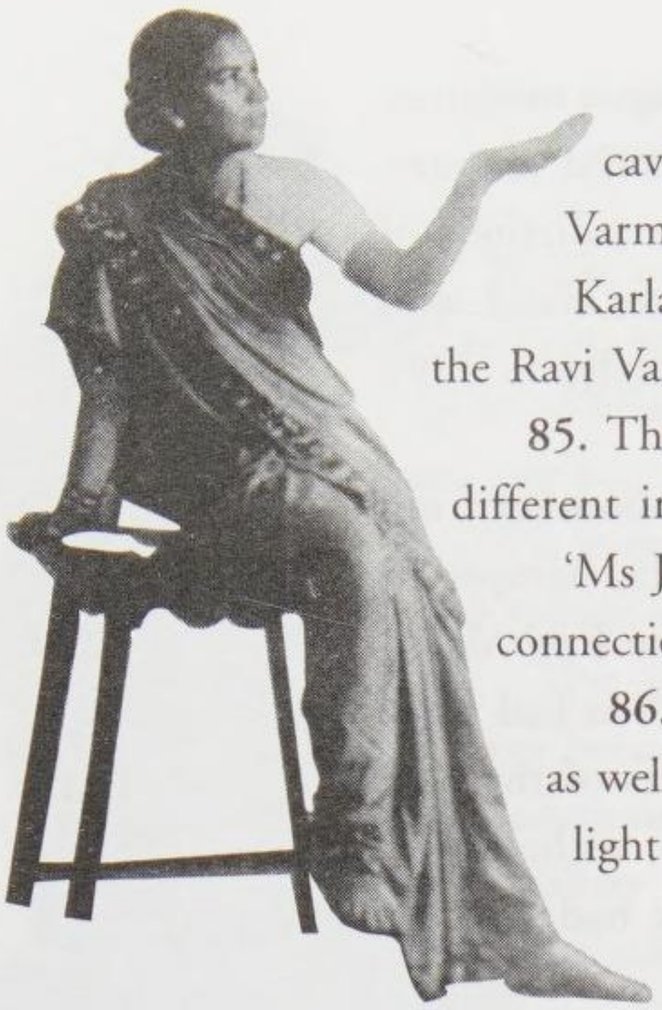
leaders were divided in extending cooperation to the imperial plague measures. When quarantine measures were enforced, it was in a dictatorial manner. Tilak accused the British of being the elementary cause of the afflictions of the Indian nation. And it was the plague administrator Walter Rand who got murdered on the evening of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 (*see also* Note 107).

The plague situation instigated a mass repatriation of labourers from Bombay and other industrial centres back to their rural homes, hampering industrial production considerably during the years to come. The Ravi Varma Press lay idle most of the time, causing huge losses, so that the Press had to be shifted from downtown Bombay to Ghatkopar at the outskirts of the city, and later to Malavli. The plague was finally eradicated in 1905, without ever having reached epidemic proportions of the dimension Europe had faced in the middle ages.

82. Schleicher (alternative spellings: Schlicker, Schleizer, Schlucker)—Fritz Schleicher (26 January 1862 Berlin(?)–29 April 1935 Malavli) (*see also* Plate 29A, B), chief of the German technicians manning the Ravi Varma Press. The diary gives many spellings of the name, which seem to have been quite exotic for an Indian tongue. It is not yet known how Schleicher and Ravi Varma first met, but it is likely that he was first contacted by the good offices of Dadabhai Naoroji, member of the house of commons, who at some time advised Ravi Varma how to go about establishing a press in 1892. In 1903, Schleicher bought the Press from Ravi Varma along with the right to produce a large number of Ravi Varma pictures for Rs 25,000 and also to take over debts of the Press in the range of Rs 5000–6000 (Diary 28 January 1901; 9 November 1903). He led the Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press to financial success. When he died he could will stocks and cash in the German Bank as well as movable and immovable property in India and Germany. For a short time after his death, the Press was under a trust whose beneficiaries were his daughters; his son was already disinherited in 1927. The trustees mismanaged the Press and finally leased it to the youngest daughter and her husband, who modernized it into a state-of-the-art offset press. Lithography was practised till the early 1950s. The Ravi Varma Press remained a famous and successful printing house till it burnt down accidentally in 1972. Although there were attempts to revive the business shortly after, it was finally closed down in 1975.



83. Girhardt—P. Gerhardt, one of the German lithographers employed in the Ravi Varma Press. Gerhardt was an accomplished painter himself, as several of his paintings show (*see also* Plate 37A). He was particularly good at backgrounds. It is not known how long he was with the Ravi Varma Press, but from a painting in the Jagan Mohan Palace in Mysore, it is known that he was in India at least till 1908, the date given on an outstanding state portrait he did for the Mysore King.



84. Caves—Bhaji Caves. Early historic Buddhist rock-cut caves in the hill overlooking the village of Bhaji, close to the Ravi Varma Press.

Karla—Karla Caves. Famous Buddhist rock-cut caves, visible from the Ravi Varma Press estate in a distance of about 10 km towards north.

85. The sentence is given here in the original since it would allow for different interpretations:

'Ms Jaymohan Das was of opinion it was better to sure[?] [sever] our connection with Govardhan Das as partnership call a deal trouble [*sic*].'

86. Gas Lamp—He obviously means a kerosene lamp; Ravi Varma as well as his brothers painted several studies of persons reading in the light of such 'German Lamps' (*see also* Plate 28A, B).

87. Royal Academy Pictures—Ravi Varma and his brother had a large library of European art journals, which served them as a mine of models and poses, which they copied. From these illustrated journals, the Varma brothers were well informed about popular art trends in Europe.

88. Ms—All through the diary, the writer reserves the plural 'Ms' (Messrs) for gentlemen, and the singular 'Mr' (Mister) is reserved for close friends.

89. Anant Shivaji Desai—Owner of a large general store in Bombay's Moti Bazar. He was also the foremost distributor for Ravi Varma Prints as well as the most important wholesale dealer for German prints. Most of the extant prints from the Ravi Varma Press indeed bear the impression: 'Published by Anand Shivajee Desai, Motibazar, Bombay' in English and Hindi. Some of the impressions also address him as 'Anand Shivajee Desai Topiwala'.

90. German Prints—Cheap colour lithographs from Germany and Austria had a limited market in the cosmopolitan cities of India. These prints were mostly of nude women bathing in lakes or rivers, or genre scenes of questionable taste annotated in at least five or six languages of the Austro-Hungarian Empire besides Spanish and English. The prints of nude women in tempting poses were not sold openly; still, they were widely distributed. Raja Ravi Varma and his brother had portfolios of such prints and also used them in their own Press (*see also* Note 236).

91. Rajibai—A young woman who modelled for Ravi Varma and Frank Brooks. Nothing more of her relation to the Varma brothers is known than what the scant diary entries disclose. She seems to have been the daughter of an acquaintance or friend. She modelled for Frank Brooks' painting *Lady with a Fan* as became clear from some of the photographs surviving in family collections and, of course, the original oil painting in the Trivandrum Art Gallery. When she is mentioned first, her father and mother have died and she had a small son, and might have been a widow, since her husband is never mentioned. But Raja Varma hints at a romantic relationship between her and

his friend Bapuji. Her friend Lakshmibai might be the other girl in some of the photographs (*see also* Plate 18).

92. This entry indicates that Ravi Varma spent the mourning period on account of his uncle's death in his wife's court at Mavelikara, where he had built a stately two-storeyed building which he used as an atelier.

93. 'Artist'—Most probably *Artists Calendar for 1897*. This volume was found in the Kilimanur Library (*see* Inventory, 'Artist's Calendar for 1897', an almanac giving addresses of art organizations, art groups, art schools, their entrant requirements etc).

94. Ithammar—Ittikomer (*see also* Notes 155, 169) Vishakam Tirunal Valiya Koil Thampuran, uncle of Raja Varma, head of the Kilimanur house. Ittikomer is a very common term of address, and denotes a person born between two other brothers, the middle one. Every man born between two other brothers is called the middle one; this is a most confusing system of naming people.

95. Junagad Nawab—Princely state in Gujarat with a Mohammedan ruler. The state is famous for the Gir Forest, the last refuge of the Asian lion. About the same time, Junagadh was remodelled on new lines of city building. Many of the more representative buildings were furnished with European furniture and chandeliers.

The king of Junagadh had an eccentric taste for blending different styles from Europe and India for his stately buildings. In the Junagadh Museum collection there are a number of portraits done by Frank Brooks, but none by Ravi Varma.

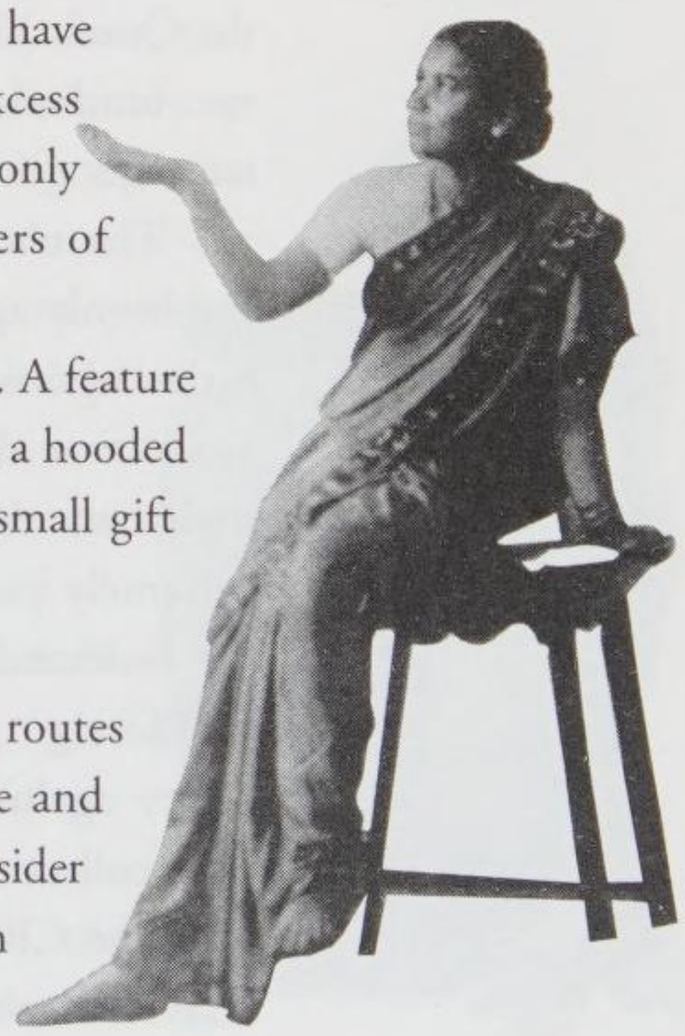
96. Ganga's Descent—This was one of the most popular prints issued from the Ravi Varma Press. It shows Bhagiratha praying for the descent of Ganga, which comes down in the form of a beautiful maiden to fall on to the matted locks of god Shiva (*see also* Plates 48, 49).

97. This entry also shows one of the most likely causes for the economic failure of the Ravi Varma Press, which, to a great extent, seems to have been caused by clandestine overproduction and sale of these excess stocks by some of the press managers. This state of affairs could only have prevailed as a result of lack of supervision of the owners of the Press.

98. Nagpanchami—Festival at the end of the monsoon season. A feature of this festival is the many snake jugglers visiting houses, presenting a hooded cobra from a basket to the mistress of the house, and receiving a small gift in return.

99. Purnima—Full moon.

100. Maravars—A 'criminal tribe' marauding on the transit routes and passes in the southern parts of the ghats between Travancore and Tamil Nadu. This entry is puzzling since nowadays the Maravars consider the Kilimanur family as their kings. But that might not have been so a hundred years ago.



101. Hamsa Damayanti—Princess Damayanti and the Swan messenger. This theme was painted by Raja Ravi Varma in several different versions.

102. Postcards—Picture postcards were introduced around 1890 and soon became very popular. Already by 1895 Indian artists had their designs produced on postcards and printed in Germany. Popular were scenes from 'Indian life', oriental stereotypes, like the (black) ayah with her (blond) ward, the Bhisti (water carrier), and other street types. Dhurandhar was one of the more famous artists who, quite early, designed picture postcards. The potential of Ravi Varma's depiction of gods and goddesses produced as postcards was also understood, and during the public exhibitions—which invariably followed the completion of the large commissions of Puranic paintings for Mysore or Baroda—photographic cards of some of the pictures were sold. Several of these postcards with Hindu deities were obviously printed in Germany, or at least the impression claimed 'Printed in Germany'. Postcards with pictures by Ravi Varma were very popular in Gujarat, and exist in some Indian collections (Rathod, R., 1993: 70; Neumayer, E., and Schelberger, C., 2003: 35A, B.)

103. Cinematograph—The Lumière brothers demonstrated cinematography in India within a few weeks of its invention. The first show was held on 7 July 1896 at the Watson Hotel and later in the Tivoly Theatre (Padgaonkar, D. [ed.], 1990: 6).

104. Baul—A particular class of folk singer.

105. Appay—Nickname of Raja Ravi Varma's youngest son Rama Varma 'Painter', who later was to become the most famous portrait painter in Kerala.

106. Village Kirtan performer—Lead singer of religious chants and songs.

107. Murder and Arrest—On 22 June 1897, the president of the Quarantine Committee and Collector of Poona, Mr Walter Rand and one other British officer—Lt Ayerst—were shot after returning from the City Hall where they attended the Queen Victoria Diamond Coronation Jubilee celebration. The assassins were two brothers, Damodar and Balkrishna Chapekar. The assassination came only ten days after the Shivaji Festival introduced by Tilak.

The nationalist agitation—spearheaded by 'Lokhmanya' Tilak—fought stubbornly against the plague measures of the British government as they did earlier against British education. They saw the dictatorial quarantine measures as no more than a harassment of the common 'black' men in India, deprived of their own resources to battle for their own fate. The political situation was extremely polarized. On one hand the Maratha nationalists were incited by the firebrand leader Tilak to fight for their nation like Shivaji fought against the 'foreign power'. On the other hand, the British had a merciless plague policy against the overpopulated quarters of the 'black towns', at the same time collecting huge sums for the celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

The Chapekar brothers were caught after being given away by the two Dravid brothers, who got rewarded by the government. The third Chapekar

brother—Vasudev—and a friend of his murdered the informers on 8 February 1899; both were hanged. The Chapekar brothers were members of a secret terrorist society.

108. Namboodiri Brahmin—Caste in Malabar, which forms the highest Hindu caste from which the ritual and scholastic leadership is constituted. The matrilinear Kshatriya castes of Malabar took consorts from the Namboodiri families. Ravi Varma's father was from this community.

109. Badrinath Temple—One of the most sacred pilgrim places in India. This ancient temple is situated at a high altitude in the Himalayan Garhwal region.

110. Tehri Raja—King of the small Himalayan kingdom of Tehri-Garhwal, a popular hunting ground for the British administrators during their summer retreats in the mountains.

111. Hooker—Hooker, Joseph Dalton (b. 1847); botanist, author of the *Himalayan Journals*, etc. (Kaul, H.K., 1979: 520).

112. Thurston—Edgar Thurston, honorary secretary of the Fine Arts Society, Madras, and keeper of the Government Museum, Madras, where he assembled a collection of paintings 'according to Western canon'.

113. Ulsavam—Yearly temple festival.

114. A.K. Joshi on Kalbadevi Road—Friend of the Varma brothers in Bombay, operating from his No. 82 Kalbadevi Road premises, where he most probably had a small photographic studio prior to the Varmas' establishing their early studio there. After their split with business partner Govardhan Das in 1898, A.K. Joshi took over some of the stocks of printed pictures and so became one of the wholesale agents of Ravi Varma prints. Immediately after Ravi Varma's death, he published a portfolio of photographs of Ravi Varma's paintings. It seems that about the same time he was instrumental in establishing the Ravi Udaya Fine Arts Lithographic Press in Ghatkopar, which, for some time, printed Ravi Varma's pictures. Although the printing quality from that press was always inferior to that of the Ravi Varma Press, the designs were extremely innovative in Indianizing the images of Indian gods and goddesses, whose classical forms and pathos were toned down with the introduction of a brighter colour scheme and traditional folk elements, such as many-armed and multi-headed deities. These prints were instrumental in making display prints a really popular medium. Schleicher—as owner of the Ravi Varma Press—successfully challenged A.K. Joshi's right to print Ravi Varma designs in at least one court case; still, the trend of scavenging parts from the original designs in new compositions could not be arrested anymore.

115. Bairagi females—Female mendicants.

116. Ulsavamadam—Family temple.

117. Birthday—Although CRRV was born on 3 March 1860, the birthday here is in accordance with the Malayalam calendar.

118. Ramaswamy Mudaliar Choultry—A guest house close to Parrys Corner, incidentally also close to the local picture merchant R. Ethirajiah, who was also the stockist of Ravi Varma prints in Madras.

119. Vasudeva Reswal—One of the Namboodiris suggested for the Temple of Badrinath by the Raja of Travancore (*see* Notes 108 and 109). (Diary 16 February 1901, 4 March 1902.)

120. Lohargarh—Name of an extensive hill-fort overlooking Bhaji village. The impenetrable walls of the fort run along the periphery of the plateau of the hill which forms the backdrop of the estate of the Ravi Varma Press.

121. Ranade—Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842–1901);

> ...He held the office of a Subordinate Judge under the Government of Bombay and could not therefore take any active part in politics. But he devoted his life to the social and economic uplift of the country. He steered a middle course between the overzealous enthusiasts who would rather secede from the Hindu society than tolerate its evils, and the orthodox who would oppose any reform.... He greatly advanced the cause of nationalism in Bombay and inspired and initiated men like Gokhale to the service of the motherland (Majumdar, R.C., 1981: 486).

122. Writer—Writer, N.N., a Parsee painter trained in London.

123. Whistler—James Whistler, British painter.

124. G. Parameswar Pillai—G.P. Pillai was one of the speakers of the Malayalam Memorial Agitation of 1891. The aim of that agitation was to accommodate members of the Nair and Ezhava community into state services. It was basically an agitation of the growing British-educated middle class for more voice in the dealings of the state. G.P. Pillai is said to have received some financial help from Ravi Varma during his law studies in London (Nayar, N.B., 1953: 151).

125. Cassel's Illustrated Edition—Cassel & Co., London, Paris, Melbourne, specialized in the publication of periodicals on art, all of which were lavishly adorned with reproductions of works of the more conventional European masterworks of the times. In Ravi Varma's library, several volumes of Cassel's publications are to be found, the earliest going back to 1892 (*see* Inventory of the Library in Kilimanur).

126. Gangor—Gana Gaur procession. A festival in honour of Goddess Gauri, where women carry the 'Garden of Adonis'—small jugs with sprouting corn—on their heads in procession to temples of the goddess.

127. Dak Bungalow—Rest houses for travelling officers. Dak—Mail.

128. Todd's Rajasthan—*See* Inventory of the Library in Kilimanur.

129. Pratap Singh—Rana Pratap Singh was the son of Jaimal Rathor, the last defender of Chitor, an extensive fort in southern Rajasthan. Akbar, by sheer luck, killed Jaimal Rathor one night by a single shot, and the fort fell after a long siege (1568). The women in the fort immolated themselves on a

huge pyre. Ultimately Rajputana became a province under Mughal suzerainty. Only a few Rajput chiefs kept up the opposition to the Mughal power. One of them was Rana Pratap Singh of Mewar, who succeeded in recapturing several of the earlier lost forts. Pratap Singh, whose life was full of peril and privation, was destined to become a hero for Indian nationalism, who reinterpreted the advent of the Mughals as the arrival of foreign power in India, comparing them to the British colonizers.

130. Gallery in memory of Queen Victoria—Victoria Memorial, a huge marble edifice, a colonial architectural manifestation, erected at the Maidan, the extensive lawn bordering the Hoogly River in Calcutta. Officially opened only in 1921, this building was to become one of the famous landmarks of Calcutta. Raja Varma, on behalf of his brother, offered two portraits and two paintings of historical scenes. Only the portrait of Sir T. Madhava Rao was supplied: the Memorial Fund ran into serious troubles and Ravi Varma's offer was never fulfilled.

131. Eklingji—One of the many names of God Shiva, here the deity of the famous Temple of Eklinghji, situated to the north of Udaipur.

132. Jugnivas—A white marble palace situated on an island in the middle of Lake Pichola, Udaipur.

133. Photograph and oil painting of Maharana Fateh Singh (*see also* Plate 13).

134. Ekadasi—Eleventh day of the month (Malayalam calendar). (*see* Note 227).

135. water crows—Cormorants.

136. The birds' names are given in Malayalam.

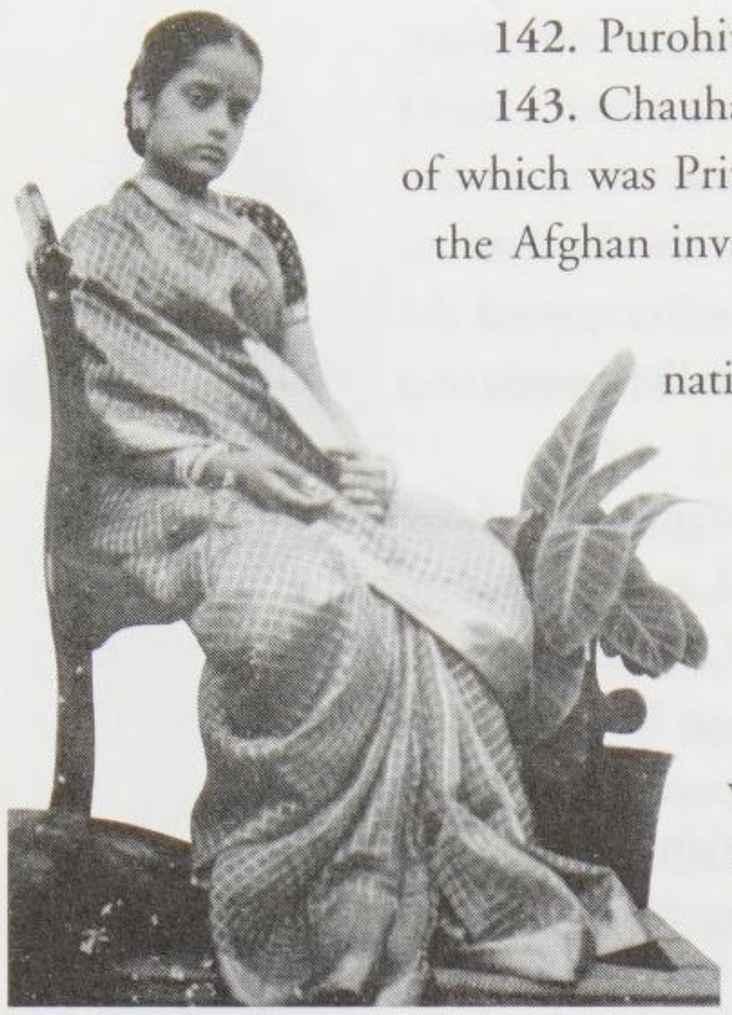
137. Most of the sketches from Udaipur are today housed in the Trivandrum Art Gallery.

138. Komulgadha—Kumbhalgarh, a famous hill fortress, about 85 km to the north of Udaipur.

139. The story of the disinherited Rajput widow is concluded in Nayar's biography of Ravi Varma: in the happy ending during the next Durbar, the widow was reinstalled in her property (Nayar, N.B., 1953: 164–5).

140. Moharram—Mourning festival for the martyrdom of Husain and his followers in the battle of Karbala. During this festival, grand displays of masjids—made of tinsel, paper, and cane—are carried through a traditional route in a city and finally immersed into a river or tank. Although a Muslim festival, by the end of the nineteenth century Moharram had become a pan-Indian national festival in which all castes and creeds participated. The closeness to local ('Hindu') traditions can be seen by the practice that, after the festival, the 'tabbots' (displays) were immersed into the lake.

141. The sketches are today displayed in the Trivandrum Art Gallery (*see also* Plate 11B, C).



142. Purohit—Family priest, in charge of the Vedic sacrifices.

143. Chauhan—One of the famous Rajput clans, the most famous ruler of which was Prithvi Raj Chauhan, who tried to raise a Rajput alliance against the Afghan invaders in the tenth century. He died fighting.

144. Delhi Assemblage, or Delhi Durbar, was staged for the native princes to hail their suzerain during the visit of the Prince of Wales or other travelling royalty. Here is probably meant the Delhi Assemblage 1877, concluding the tour of the Duke of Avondale, later Prince of Wales and still later Edward, King of England.

145. Kunnallal—Kundan Lal, court painter at Udaipur, who had been to England for training, but continued even after to paint in the traditional style of Udaipur.

146. Mehendi—Henna, the term is given here in the Malayali script.

147. The affix 'ji' to a name in India denotes an honorific.

148. Bhils—Large tribal community in western central India. The criminal tradition which Raja Varma mentions here derives from the long-standing antagonism between the Rajput landowners and the agricultural Bhils over the scarce water and land resources.

149. See Note 100.

150. This oil sketch is on display in the Trivandrum Art Gallery.

151. Ayappan—See Note 78.

152. Junior Rani—Rani Parvatibai, the next younger sister of the Senior Rani—Lakshmibai, the wife of Kerala Varma—and elder sister to Bhagirathi, the wife of Ravi Varma. Since the Senior Rani was childless, Parvatibai's sons would have been next in line for the Travancore throne.

153. Senior Rani—See Note 77.

154. Mewar—The landscape north of the river Chambal. The term is here given in Malayalam.

155. Ithammar—Itthikomer; K.R.R., as he is referred to quite frequently in the diary, a cousin of CRRV.

156. The slokas are written in Malayalam (Sharma, R.C., 1993; the translation is taken from *Raja Ravi Varma: New Perspectives*).

157. Narada—The minstrel of the celestials, some of the Rig Vedic hymns are ascribed to him. He is also considered the inventor of the veena, and is often depicted as horse-headed.

158. Portrait of Pannalal Mehta (*see also* Plate 12A, B, C).

159. Chitore—Chittorgarh.

160. Caliti State—It is not clear which state is meant, but most probably Chhaliar State.

161. Naini Tal—A hill station in the Kumaon Himalaya, which served as a popular summer retreat for the British officials of the United Provinces.

162. This book by Waltery (London, 1889), photographer to the Queen, as well as the dedication 'To Ravi Varma Koil Thampuran of Kilimanur' is available in the library of Kilimanur. The book contains portrait photographs of British statesmen, cardinals, and the like, with short biographical notes (*see* Inventory).

163. Royal Academy Pictures—A supplement to the *Magazine of Art* presented to many of the European masters of the period in large wood engravings. An almost complete collection of the 'Royal Academy Pictures' is still available in the Kilimanur library (*see* Inventory).

164. Naoroji—A Parsee painter who had been to London for training.

165. Bania—Trader.

166. Narayan Rao Peshwa—Titular head of the Marathas. He was murdered after a plot instigated by his uncle Rayanathurao in 1773. The succession of the posthumously born son of the slain king brought an epic quality to this chapter of Maratha history, in which almost all the powers present at the Indian subcontinent during that time were involved.

167. Ragas and Raginis—Systems of improvising melodies in Indian music.

168. Push-push—Rickshaw.

169. Ittikomer—The middle one. Raja Varma had two elder brothers, the first was Raja Ravi Varma, the middle one—Ittikomer—Gode Varma.

170. Ganesh Chathurthi—Since Ganesh, the elephant-headed son of Siva, had [cursed] the moon [for transgressing into his parents' bedroom], one should avoid the glance of moonshine during this particular night.

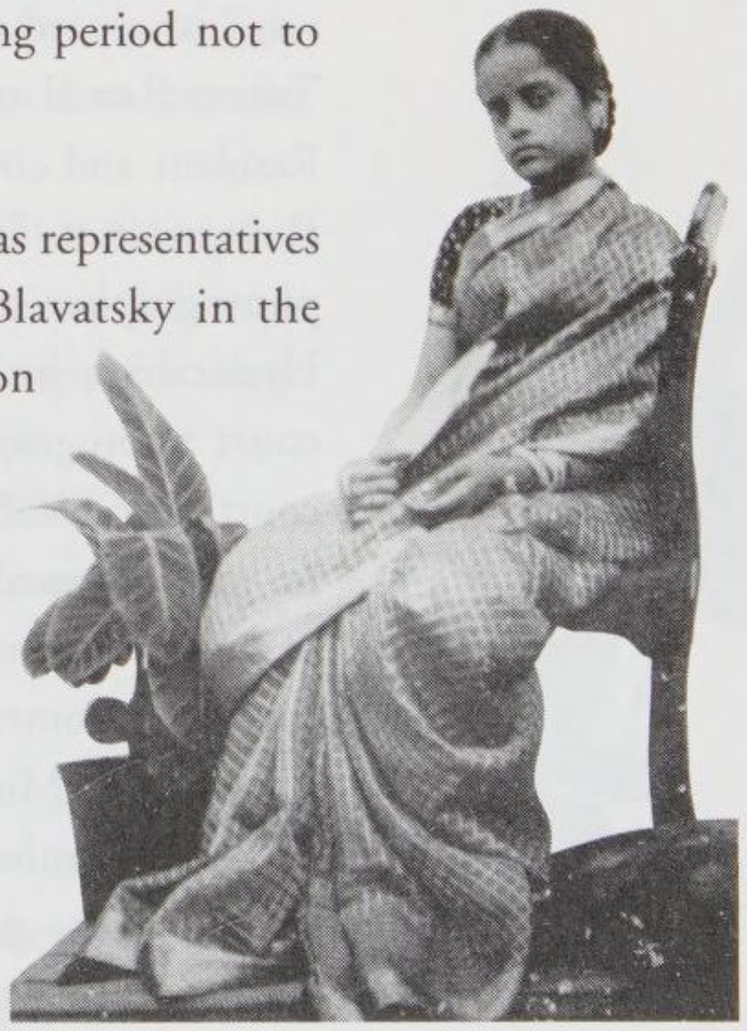
171. Courtallam—A popular hill station in the hills east of Trivandrum, today in Tamil Nadu.

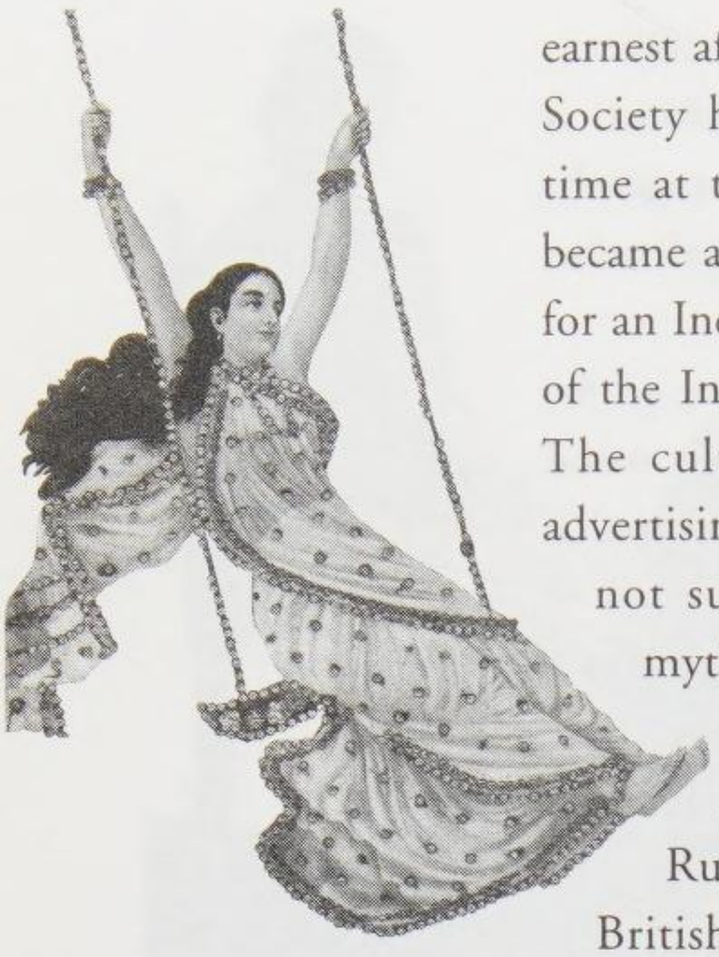
172. The Princesses—Raja Ravi Varma's granddaughters—his daughter's daughters—were adopted into the royal household of Travancore as Ranis of Attingale by the Senior Rani Lakshmibai to perpetuate the lineage.

173. It was the custom during the one-year-long mourning period not to shave or cut one's hair.

174. Bezwada—Vijayawada.

175. Annie Besant and Colonel H.S. Olcott came to India as representatives of the Theosophical Society, a sect founded by 'Madame' Blavatsky in the USA, 1875. Since the Theosophical Society derived its jargon from Buddhist and Brahmanical sources—Blavatsky herself was in spiritual union with the five Mahatmas, enlightened sages in possession of the universal truth, who lived in the solitude of Tibet—it soon grew to a veritable organization with a core of influential and rich followers. The formula of the organization was rather new at that time: a mix of occultist, tantric, and Indological hearsay with spiritualist ideas and formulas, including blunt racism with a veneer of a 'brotherhood of men' ideology. The organization took off in





earnest after Annie Besant and Col. H.S. Olcott established the Theosophical Society headquarters at a sprawling estate along the Adyar River, at that time at the outskirts of Madras. From then on, the Theosophical Society became a strong cultural factor in the de-culturated bourgeoisie and its fights for an Indian national cultural identity. Indeed, many of the early personalities of the Indian National Congress were members of the Theosophical Society. The cultural posturing of the society was indophile, projecting and advertising the greatness of a—bygone—Hindu Indian past. It is therefore not surprising that Ravi Varma's westernized visualization of Indian mythology was soon to be criticized from the very same quarter for not adhering to—what they understood as—the Indian aesthetic spirit. Annie Besant would later become the founder of the Indian Home Rule League, imprisoned for her role in nationalist activities by the British and elected president of the Indian National Congress in 1917. She was one of the most influential thinkers of the struggle for Indian independence.

176. Anicut—Ancient headworks of a channel system directing the waters of the river Krishna into an extensive irrigation network.

177. Vizagapatam—Vishakhapatnam and Waltair have today grown into a single city.

178. Telugu cook—Telugu-speaking cook; a native from Andhra country, today the state of Andhra Pradesh.

179. Bimlipatam—Bhimunipatam.

180. Vakil—Advocate.

181. Zamindar—Hereditary landowner with certain rights of taxation.

182. Raja Dean Dayal—Raja Deen Dayal, photographer, was born in 1844 at Sardhana in Meerut into a family of jewellers. Trained in engineering and employed as chief draftsman in the Public Works Department, Indore, he was introduced to photography and was later patronized by the then Maharaja Tukoji Rao II of Indore. Eventually, he became photographer to the English Resident and covered the visit of the Prince of Wales and his entourage during their visit to India in 1875, which was followed by his appointment as photographer to His Excellency, The Viceroy. During his sojourn through Hyderabad, he photographed the Nizam, who promptly appointed him as court photographer. Here, he kept regular pictorial accounts of the Nizam's court from 1885 onwards till his death in 1905. For his service to the Nizam, he was bestowed with the honorific title of 'Raja'. Deen Dayal was the owner of several flourishing studios in Secunderabad and Indore, a zenana studio, a studio for women only in which he placed an English lady of 'high photographic attainment' (Mitter, P., 1994: 198) in Hyderabad, as well as a large workshop studio in Bombay. Deen Dayal not only covered court life but also did outdoor photography—partly to cover hunting expeditions of the king, partly to cover public works undertakings, as for example famine relief and documentation of

archaeological monuments and sites. Deen Dayal also exhibited his works during the Columbian Fair in Chicago in 1893 where he—like his compatriot Raja Ravi Varma—was presented with a gold medal.

183. *At the Bath* was finally painted (*see also* Plate 37B). It is supposed 'to show a Malabar Girl in the very moment when she descends the stairs down into the water under the shadow of a traditional Keralite bath house, whose roofs extend almost to the water surface to prevent unauthorized glances. The painter catches the very moment when she is stepping into the water. In alarm on account of a trespasser, she cradles her mundu about her in surprise'. The painting is now the most prominent showpiece on the walls of the formal sitting room of the Khowdiar Palace in Trivandrum. Although the painting was never for public viewing, it caught the interest of some of the biographers, who declared it as a symbol of the chastity of Malabar womanhood. Other—better informed—biographers saw that the lady in the painting might not be the portrait of an 'unsipped blossom' (Pillai, S.A., 1928: 28).

184. Egyptian lady—At the time, an Egyptian woman represented a dancing girl.

185. Kasthuri—Fragrance, manufactured from a gland of the musk deer.

186. Sowar—Coachman, horse-groom.

187. 1–9 a—1 rupee 9 annas; 15 rupees—1 sovereign; 16 rupees—1 gold mohur; 1 rupee—16 annas; 1 anna—12 pies; 3 pies—1 paisa or 1/4 anna.

188. Rajkumar College— situated at Rajkot and not Ajmer.

189. *See* Note 78.

190. Conjivaram—Kanchipuram.

191. Mudaliars—Traders.

192. Ekambareshwaran Kovil and Kamashi Kovil—Two main temples of Kanchipuram dedicated to Shiva and Parvati respectively.

193. Diwali—Hindu festival season, commemorating the victory of light over darkness. Also Hindu New Year, when traditional business communities open the new account books.

194. Lord Ampthill—Governor of Madras. Ravi Varma painted Ampthill as well as his wife and son. Photographs of Lord and Lady Ampthill were found in Ravi Varma's library in Kilimanur. One of the photographs shows Ampthill in masonic robes (*see also* Plate 10B, C; *see* Note 260).

195. King's Proclamation—Proclamation of King Edward VII.

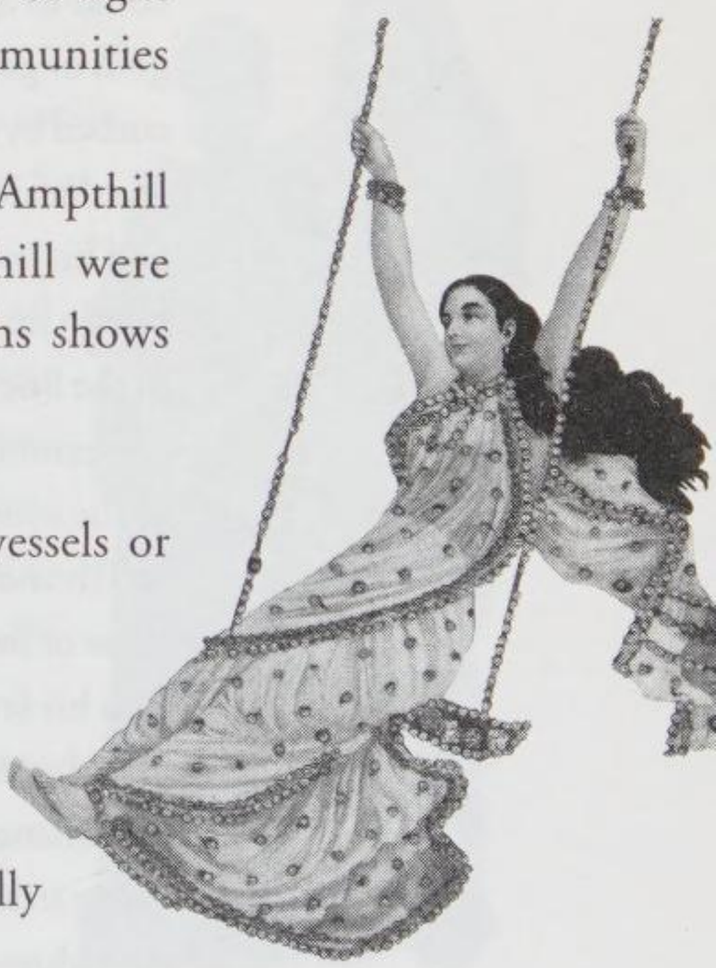
196. Aarat—Worship of the deity by waving lamps or incense vessels or camphor etc. in front of the image.

197. Tamasha—Celebration with much pomp and show.

198. Nampidi—*See* Note 108.

199. Yagna—Vedic fire-sacrifice.

200. Elephant Porch—Anakottal—the term for such a porch usually situated in front of a temple is here given in the Malayali script.



201. 'Nadasurap' is the term, given in Malayali script—The term for a musician playing the Nadaswaram, which is an instrument of the woodwind group, looking rather like a clarinet, but the mouthpiece holds a double reed.

202. Big Banyan Tree—This tree, which was planted with the establishment of the house at Kilimanur, was situated right outside the main gate and surrounded by a platform. The tree collapsed during a storm in 1993.

203. Sister—Mangalabai Thampuratty received training in painting by her uncle Raja Raja Varma. She was a very gifted painter, practising her art right into old age.

204. On the biographical note published in *Prabasi*, Allahabad—

The biographical sketch in the *Modern Review* was very close to the one published in *Prabasi* from Allahabad in 1903, which was a matrix to all further biographies. The diary (15 May 1903) mentions the supply of biographical material to *Prabasi*.

We cite one of these short biographical sketches titled 'An Indian Artist: Mr Ravi Varma' from the *Album of Men and Women of India*, January 1906: 82–4, Bombay; which also contains other biographies of Indian personalities like Gokhale, Tata, and several of the native princes:

An Indian Artist

Ravi Varma, the famous Indian Artist comes of an ancient and noble Kshatrya family, closely connected with the royal house of Travancore. Born on the 29th of April, 1848, in his ancestral palace of Kilimanur, he received the usual vernacular and classical education given in those days to sons of aristocratic families at the hands of private tutors. The saying that the child is father to the man was never more literally verified than in the case of Ravi Varma; for, instead of devoting his whole time to his studies, he snatched opportunities as often as he could to apply himself to the delightful task of making drawings, with chalk or charcoal, of gods or goddesses, on the walls and floors of his mansion. This boyish propensity was naturally curbed by most of the members of his family. His mother Uma Ambar Bai, however, who was an educated and refined lady, and who had won local reputation for her poetical compositions, and his maternal uncle, Raja Raja Varma, foresaw the future artist in the boy and encouraged him in his drawings. Raja Raja Varma, himself an artist of a high order, taught him all he knew in the line of water colour painting, which he himself practised as an amusement and not as a profession; for the profession of the artist was in those days regarded too degraded to be suited to the sons of the aristocracy. Ravi Varma, when he was but barely 13, was taken by his uncle to Trivandrum and was introduced to the then Maharaja of Travancore. Highly pleased with some of the boy's paintings which were shown to His Highness, the Maharaja at once took him into his favour and gave him every facility to pursue his arts studies.

In 1866 Ravi Varma was married to the youngest sister of H.H. The Late Senior Rani of Travancore. Two years later an event took place which was to influence Ravi Varma's future career to the greatest possible extent. It was the visit to Trivandrum of an English Artist named Theodore Jansen, who came there to paint the portraits of the Maharaja and his family.

Through the kind intervention of His Highness, Ravi Varma was allowed to watch Mr Jansen at his work. Unaccustomed till then to the use and effect of oil colours, Ravi Varma was greatly struck with the work of the European artist, and resolved to practice himself in the use of those colours. But Jansen soon went away, and there was none to advise him in mixing the colours. The one man who knew anything of oil painting in the state was a protege of the then first Prince; and he, considering Ravi Varma as a possible rival, refused to give him any help. Nothing daunted, he applied himself vigorously to his pursuit, and in a few years succeeded in overmatching his rival in all the Fine Arts Exhibitions to which both of them contributed. In the Madras fine Arts Exhibition of 1873 his picture, 'A Nair Lady adorning her hair with a garland of Jasmine,' carried off the Governor's Gold Medal, and the Governor himself was so well pleased with the picture that he granted Ravi Varma a private audience with him. The same picture brought to the young artist a medal and a certificate on the occasion of the great international exhibition at Vienna.

'A Tamil Lady playing on a Sarbat' was the subject of his next year's picture (1874) in the Fine Arts Exhibition at Madras. It ultimately found its way to the album of H.M. The King Emperor, to whom it was given as a present by the Maharaja of Travancore in 1875.

In 1876 the subject of his exhibit at the Madras Exhibition was 'Shakuntala writing a Love Letter to King Dushyanta'. It not only carried off the first price [*sic*], but was at once purchased by the then Governor, the Duke of Buckingham. Two years later Ravi Varma painted a life size portrait of the Duke to be placed in the Madras Government House and the success of the picture elicited the warmest praise. It bears favourable comparison with the works of the renowned European Artists which together with it now adorn the hall of the Government House. Meanwhile the Maharaja, who all along extended his generous patronage to Ravi Varma, fell ill and died soon after. But his successor, the immediate predecessor of the present Maharaja, showed him as much favour as his deceased patron. He executed several pictures for the new Maharaja, among which 'Sita's Ordeal' came in the end into the possession of H.H. the Gaekwar of Baroda. An other picture, 'The young Naier Girl', also found its way to Baroda soon through Sir T. Madhava Rao, the then Prime Minister of the State, and it was not only awarded the Gaekwar's Gold Medal at the Poona Fine Arts Exhibition, but attracted a good deal of notice at the time. Mr Ravi Varma accompanied by his brother, the late Mr Raja Raja Varma, visited Baroda towards the close of 1881 at the invitation of the Gaekwar, and painted several portraits for his family. From Baroda, Ravi Varma went to Bhavnagar at the invitation of its Chief, and after doing some portraits for him, soon returned to his native place in Travancore. A short time after his return home he lost his venerable uncle, but for whom Mr Ravi Varma would not have been the artist he is today.

In 1885 Mr Ravi Varma went to Mysore at the request of the late Maharaja of that state, and, for his work there, he was presented with, among other costly things, two beautiful elephants. At the International Exhibition held at Calcutta and at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition held in London, his pictures met with a splendid reception. In the midst, however, of his success another misfortune overtook him. His mother, to whom he was warmly attached, breathed her last at the comparatively early age of 54, and he passed the whole year in mourning.

In 1888 the Gaekwar commissioned him to execute a set of 14 paintings representing chosen scenes from the Hindu Epics, and a splendid triumph of these paintings, when in 1890 they were completed and exhibited publicly at Baroda, was shown by the fact that they drew a vast concourse of people from Bombay and other

places. The popular demand for the photos of these and similar pictures became so great that Mr Ravi Varma was induced to establish a lithographic press at Bombay. The service which this press has been doing to this country for many years past, by spreading a real love for the fine arts, has been acknowledged on all hands. There is scarcely a cultured and well to do home from the Himalayas to the Cape Comarin that does not possess one copy at least of Ravi Varma's beautiful paintings. Even the man in the street has been enabled to enjoy them. Most of the titled personages in Upper- and Southern India possess original pictures of the Artist, and there have been pouring in orders for works from all quarters in India. He was awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal in 1904 in recognition of his services in the field of Indian Fine Arts. Towards the close of the year, Raja Varma, the brother and companion in all his labours, was suddenly gathered to his forefathers. He was a promising artist himself, and was an invaluable assistant to Ravi Varma in all his works. Had he but lived a few years more, he would have become one of the first nature painters of the day.

Mr Ravi Varma is now 57 years of age, and still keeps up the freshness and vigour of his youth. His career is yet only half finished; there is still a brilliant future before him. Criticisms on his life and work are now quite premature. And yet we can not close this sketch without some notice of the character of his work. His originality of conception; his fine perception of the beautiful in life, his happy blending of the western method of painting with purely oriental ideas, and his freedom from all kinds of cast-iron rules—all these are amply born out by his productions. The influence of Ravi Varma in the field of Indian Art is indeed great. But for him the revival of the art of painting in India would, as a writer once said, have been a slow progress. When the history of Indian Art comes to be written by future historians, Ravi Varma will be recognized as the father of modern Indian Art.

Mr Ravi Varma leads a simple and unostentatious life. He is a gentlemen [*sic*] every inch, courteous, liberal minded and considerate; and his winning manners and charming conversation have won for him several friends among those who have come in contact with him. He is modest enough to consider himself still a student of fine arts. He is now engaged, in his palatial mansion at Kilimanur, Travancore in executing a series of paintings for H.H. The Maharaja of Mysore, and, in this work, he is assisted by his son, Mr M. Rama Varma Raja, a young and promising artist, who bits fair [*sic*] to make a name for himself.

We reproduce a selection of pictures from the original paintings by Ravi Varma.

The Paintings reproduced in this publication came with the captions:

Tara Devi, The wife of Vali the great devotee of Ram going out to sea with her maid to bathe.

Shakuntala, wife of King Dushayanta writing him a love letter.

Photograph of Ravi Varma wearing the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal.

Damayanti, wife of Nal Raja, mourning the separation of her husband, her maid fanning and consoling.

Sita, wife of the great Hindu God Rama, asking him to get her the golden skin of the deer.

Radha, wife of Krishna, bemoaning the separation of her husband, her maid servant consoling her.

Gangabishma, throwing away her child in the river.

Saraswati, the Hindu Goddess of learning.

Sweet recollections.

205. Weight—*See also* Diary 2 February 1899, 22 March 1899, and 8 March 1903.

206. Meissonier—*See also* 17 March 1903.

207. The entry in the diary clearly says 80,000, but this sum is so enormous that Rs 8000 seems more likely.

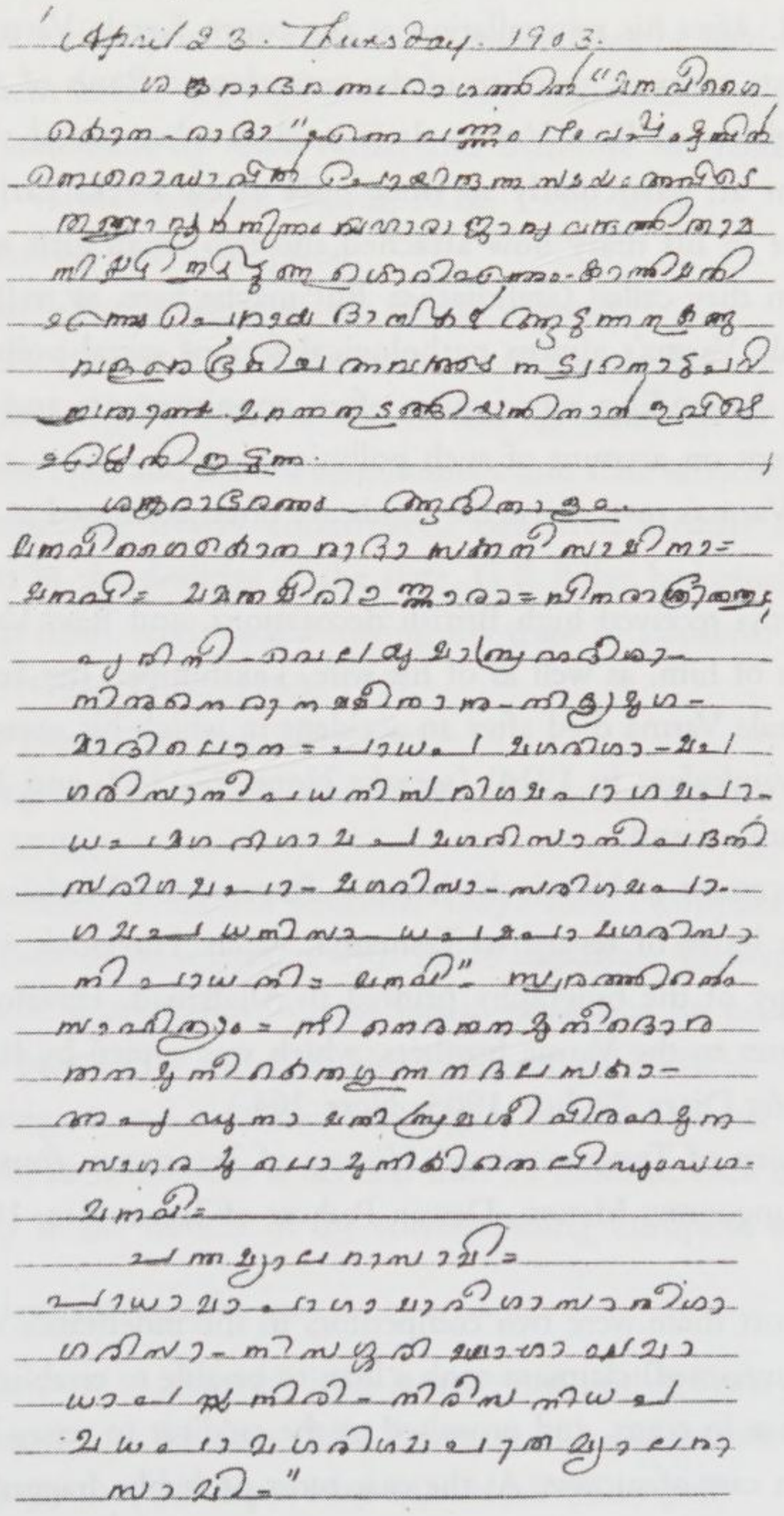
208. The term given here is in Malayalam.

209. Never out of the water—He constantly took baths for purification.

210. Devapura—God's house; the term is given in Malayalam. The domestic sanctuary in Kilimanur is across a 100m-wide stretch of agricultural lowland on a slightly elevated ground.

211. Vaishnava—Follower of God Vishnu/Krishna. Actresses in 'native' troupes at that time were generally from Parsee backgrounds. Indeed female roles in 'native theatre' were mostly played by men.

212. Shankara Bharanam raga in Aditala—Major scale in 4/4. The entry gives notations in Malayalam (see facsimile).



213. *See* Note 204.

214. Nizam's portrait—A formal photograph of Ravi Varma as gentleman painter posing before a portrait of the Nizam of Hyderabad (*see also* Plate 3D).

215. *See* Note 82.

216. Kerala Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran—(19 February 1845–22 September 1914). The epithet of Kerala Varma in his native Kerala is 'The Kalidasa of Kerala'. He was one of the most influential personalities of Travancore during his times. A famous Sanskrit littérateur and educationist, he was the founder of several Sanskrit societies. He was close to the court of Travancore and husband of the Senior Rani Lakshmibai, the elder sister of RV's wife. A court intrigue between the two brothers and successive rulers Ayilyam Thirunal (1860–80) and Vishakam Thirunal (1880–5) saw him incarcerated for more than five years from 1875 till the enthronement of Vishakam Thirunal. Ravi Varma—as husband of the sister of the Senior Rani—was drawn into this intrigue as well. After his reinstallation at the court, Kerala Varma filled high government posts and was guardian of the two adopted Ranis of Attingale, the two granddaughters of Ravi Varma. It is unclear what moral shortcomings CRRV did hint at, particularly so since only a few weeks earlier (27 May 1903) he wrote in his diary how attached the two small girls were to their guardian, whom they called Grandfather. But maybe here, as well, CRRV was biased by Kerala Varma's almost pathological fear of sacral pollution, which was also quite demanding, since quite often appointments and appearances could not be kept on account of such pollutions.

In Kerala Varma's own diary, the Ranis are often addressed as 'My Darling Ranis', etc.

Kerala Varma received high British decorations, and Ravi Varma painted several portraits of him, as well as of his wife, Lakshmibai, the Senior Rani of Travancore. Kerala Varma died after an accident in which his motor car turned turtle near Kayamkulam in 1914) (*see also* Notes 77, 152, and 172).

217. Desam—Land.

218. On account of Havelock's letter to Ramaswami Mudaliar, the Varma brothers sent a letter of regard to Tasmania, where Havelock was governor, including a copy of the biography printed in Allahabad. Havelock in return sent a direct letter to the Varma brothers, which was copied by Raja Varma in his diary (*see also* Diary 22 July 1903, Note 204.)

219. History of Travancore—*A History of Travancore from the Earliest Times* by P. Shungoonny Menon, Dewan Peshcar of Travancore, 1878 (Menon, P.S., 1878).

220. In short there were two competitors to the inheritance of a landlord of which one (unnamed) claimant took a loan to be able to establish his priority to the inheritance in court, and promised to the creditor to repay him the sum of Rs 25,000 in case of success. As the case most probably dragged on in court

without result, CRRV and his cousin agreed to use their (and obviously also Raja Ravi Varma's) influence to see the case successfully through. For this the first creditor was willing to pay the consideration of Rs 10,000 from the Rs 25,000 originally promised.

What we see here is a classic case of land dispute, which could be settled only by greasing the palms of so many judicial functionaries, or using extrajudicial influences. And it seems that during his last years Raja Ravi Varma acted increasingly like a feudal zamindar, using the clout and influence which he acquired as a star painter at the princely courts of India.

That he has made portraits of many judges of high courts all across south India was of considerable advantage, as can be understood from the dispute the Varmas had with the Omanpallikara Namboodiri on their own land (Diary 21 June 1903).

The case of Tiruvella Rajahs versus Mariyapilli was finally won by the former (Diary 22 December 1903). Curiously, this land dispute case is interpreted as a victory of the right cause on account of Ravi Varma giving a wrong statement before the high court to help the weak. The judge could not disbelieve a statement by Ravi Varma and therefore the land under dispute went to Ravi Varma's protégé (Nayar, N.B., 1953: 151).

221. Tandri—The head priest.

Kadiyettu—The hoisting of the flag at festivals.

222. M.G. Parameshwar Pillay was one of the speakers of the Malayalam Memorial agitation of 1891. The aim of that agitation was to introduce more members of the Nair and Ezhava communities into state services. It was basically an agitation of the newly constituted educated middle class for more representation in the dealings of the state. G.P. Pillay had received some financial help from Ravi Varma during his time in London, where he studied law (Nayar, N.B., 1953: 151).

223. *See* Notes 204 and 218.

224. Nagamaiah—V. Nagam Aiya, *Travancore State Manual*, Trivandrum 1906.

225. Ithammar Vishakam Thirunal Valiya Koil Thampuran—Uncle Raja Raja Varma (not to be mistaken with uncle Raja Raja Varma, artist) died in 1896, on whose account Ravi Varma was in mourning for one year.

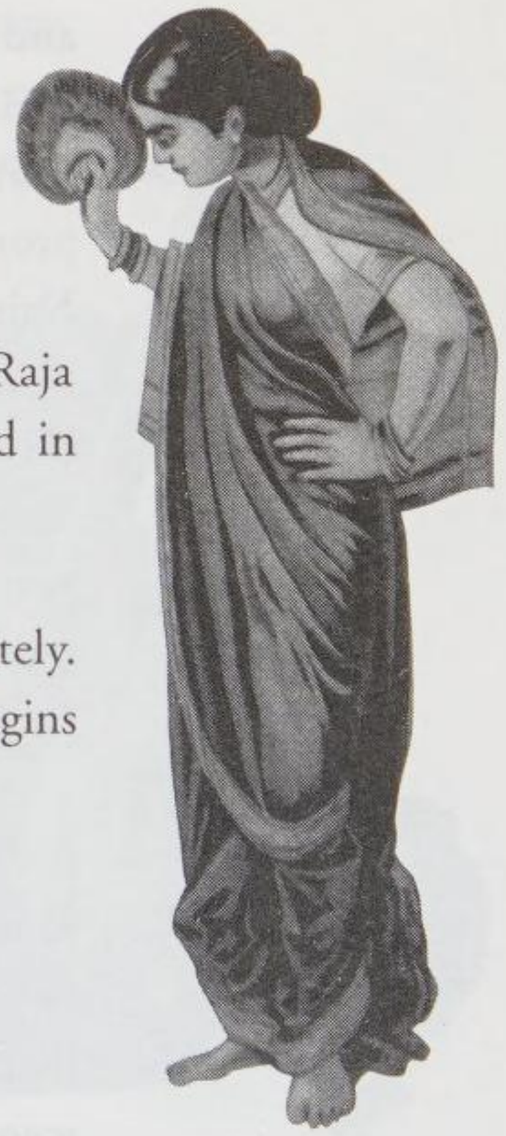
226. *See* Notes 204 and 218; also Diary 22 July 1903.

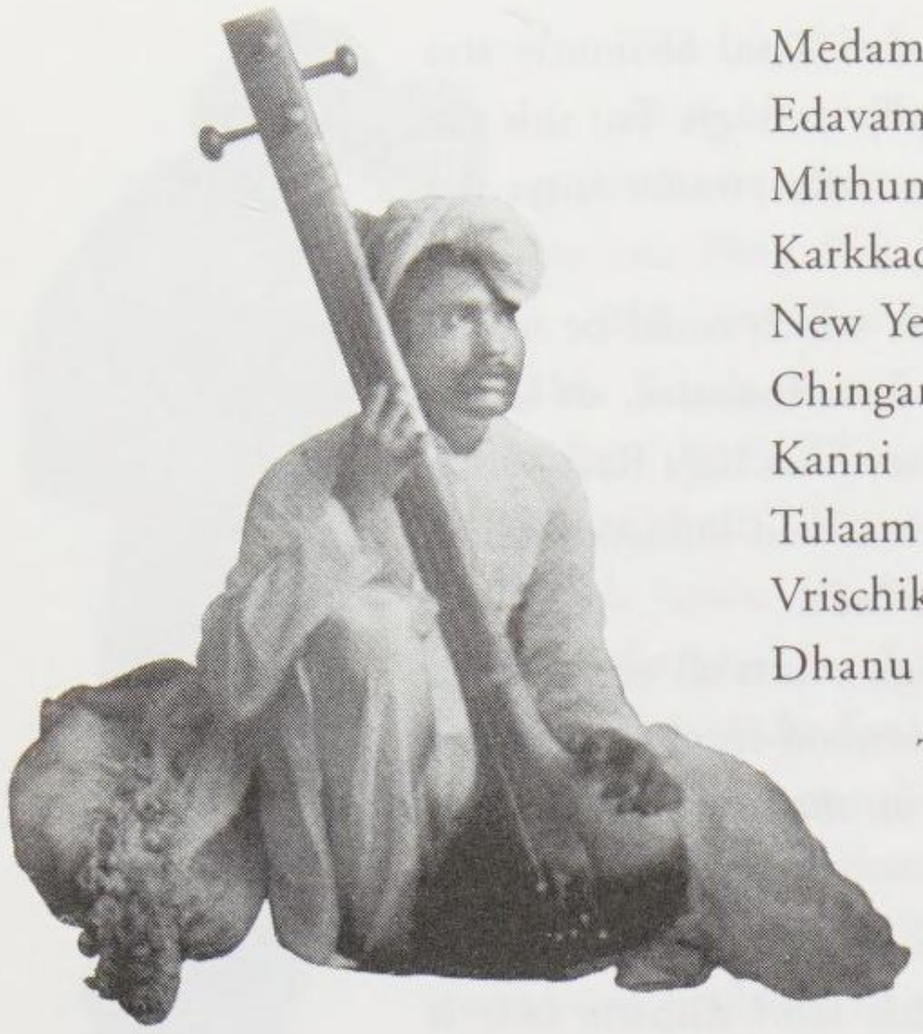
227. Chingam and Kanni—Mid-August to mid-October approximately.

The Malayalam calendar is divided into 12 months, each of which begins approximately in the middle of the corresponding European months.

The Malayalam months are:

Makaram	29 days	Mid-January till mid-February
Kumbam	31 days	Mid-February till mid-March
Meenam	30 days	Mid-March till mid-April





Medam	31 days	Mid-April till mid-May
Edavam	32 day	Mid-May till mid-June
Mithunam	31 days	Mid-June till mid-July
Karkkadakam	32 days	Mid-July till mid-August
New Year		
Chingam	31 days	Mid-August till mid-September
Kanni	30 days	Mid-September till mid-October
Tulaam	30 days	Mid-October till mid-November
Vrischikam	30 days	Mid-November till mid-December
Dhanu	30 days	Mid-December till mid-January

The Malayalam era is 824 or 825 years behind the Christian era, depending on the position of a date before or after Chingam.

228. *See* Diary 3 February 1903 and 8 June 1903; *see also* Plate 3D.

229. *See* Diary 30 June 1903.

230. Malayala Manorama—Weekly paper in Malayalam which, since 1896, regularly had features on the Varma brothers. One of the early biographies of Ravi Varma was part of a series 'Our Great Men' published on 21 March 1896.

231. Vishnu Moos—Famous Ayurvedic physician, under whose guidance Ravi Varma used to take his yearly rejuvenating oil baths, and who also officiated during Ravi Varma's last hour.

232. Raja Varma touches upon a problem here which, in the aristocratic society of the day, was very acute. The matrilinear clans in Malabar were in the process of disintegration. A new value system which did away with the dichotomy of sacral and actual marriages (permitting men of certain castes and lineages to sexually approach women of particular lineages) was under social attack. Early literary works in modern Malayalam like *Indulekha* and *Martandavarma*, centred just around this system, now understood as promiscuous, of sexual arrangements particularity between the Kshatriya and Nair clans and the Namboodiri junior lineages. Raja Varma was himself married to a Nair woman. A popular saying in Kerala declares: 'A Nair does not know his father!' Raja Varma committed himself strongly to monogamy, not only here in the diary entry, but also in a short article which he wrote in the same year in a ladies' magazine on the Namboodiri women of Malabar where he dwells mostly on their chastity and the punishment for adultery (Nandakumar, R. 1995: 41–89; Varma, C.R.R., 1903, Vol. III: 77–8).

233. Shakuntala—Play by the fifth(?)-century poet Kalidas. The heroine is Shakuntala, the foster-daughter of a hermit falling in love with King Dushyanta. Dealing with the meeting, separation, and final reunion of the two lovers, the play is one of the best-known plays based on ancient mythological literature in India. Ravi Varma based some of his most famous paintings on scenes from this play.

234. *See* Note 169.

235. Nayar—Nair, a martial class in Malabar. In the Hindu hierarchy of caste, this class is regarded as a Kshatriya caste. Most of its members live on agriculture. Members from this caste traditionally served in the army and police forces. Nairs intermarried with Kshatriyas even of royal lineage. Most of the Nair castes were strictly matrilinear: inheritance was through the female line only. Husbands therefore had no right to the property of their wives.

236. Cheap German pictures—In the second half of the nineteenth century, Germany had a large and well-developed printing industry, specialized in the production of cheap display prints. A large number of printing presses in Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, and Munich catered to an ever-increasing world market for printed images for wall decoration as well as for advertisement and political and religious propaganda.

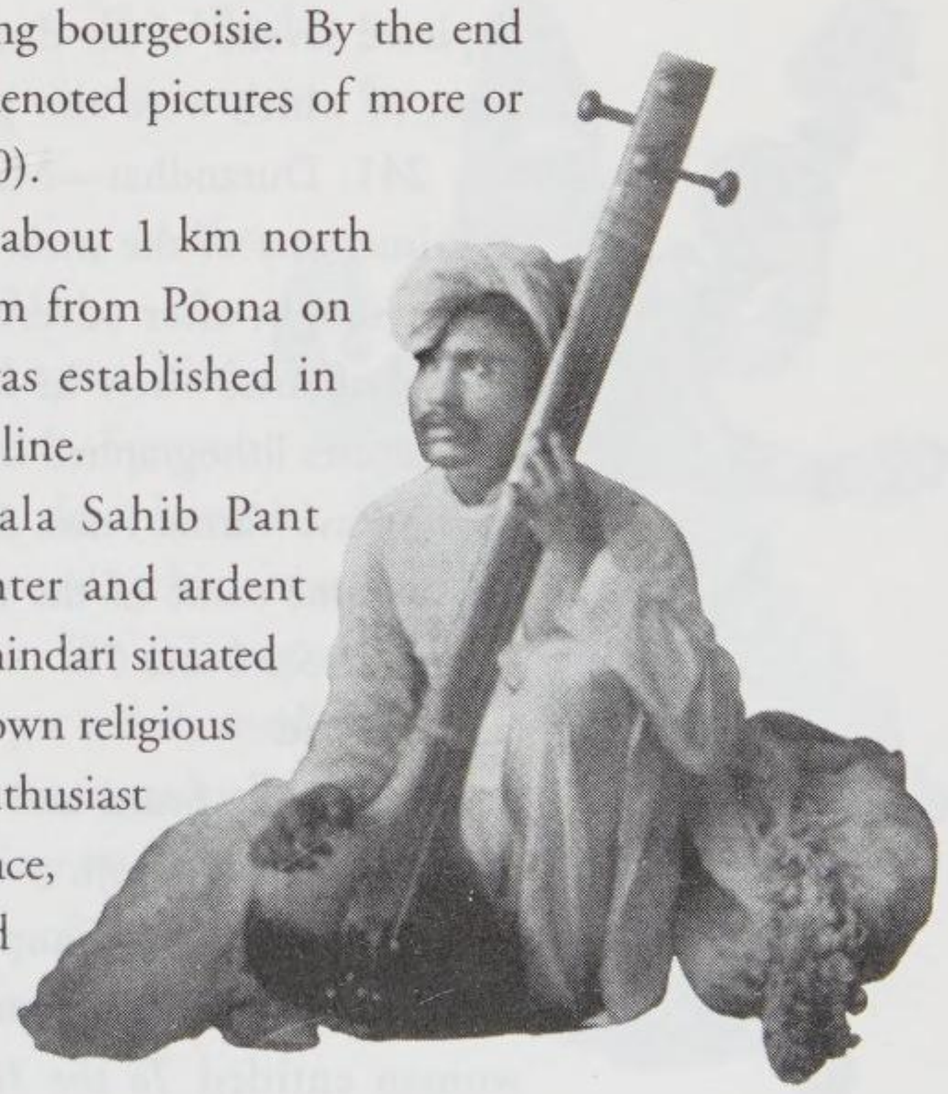
Printing of pictures in the lithographic process during the second half of the nineteenth century was already a highly mechanized art. Cylinder presses were driven by steam power, producing 800 impressions per hour. The brightly coloured prints, mainly copying classical paintings, were distributed under several more or less fanciful names, suggesting the closeness of the prints to the art of oil painting. Chromo-lithography and oleography were more common terms for these prints.

The German producers catered, before all, to the aesthetic of the lower middle class in Europe, where these cheap prints had to substitute for more expensive engravings and oil paintings of aristocratic and upper-class wall decoration. The status of these prints was redefined in other parts of the world according to the status of the art they were to substitute, or according to the price they could command.

The Indian market for display prints lay mostly in the cosmopolitan towns, with a sizeable population of the de-culturated trading bourgeoisie. By the end of the nineteenth century, 'German Prints' in India denoted pictures of more or less naked women (*see* Plates 32, 36; *see also* Note 90).

237. Karli village and Bhaji village—Situated about 1 km north and south respectively of the Station Malavli, 60 km from Poona on the Poona–Bombay line. The Ravi Varma Press was established in 1901 close to Bhaji village overlooking the railway line.

238. Aundh—Shrimant Bhavanrao alias Bala Sahib Pant Pratinidhi, the Raja of Aundh, was himself a painter and ardent collector of Indian art. He was the head of a small zamindari situated near Satara, where he filled the family temple with his own religious paintings of large size and Puranic themes. This art enthusiast built an art museum situated at the most unlikely place, a place where no museum was ever seen: situated amidst the undulating and bare hills of the Deccan, to be reached only by the long and winding stone



steps leading to a fort-like temple at the top of the hill. Somewhere half-way up an art deco edifice holds the treasure cabinet of the Rajah: Indian paintings from the turn of the century, traditional miniatures, and a large number of copies of Ravi Varma's works, which are particularly interesting because they were copied by the painters D.V. Pandit and R.D. Chitari during the 1920s and 1930s, with all the original dates and signatures. Besides this there are many sculptures from the early twentieth century, as also the memorabilia of the Maharaja's sojourns through Europe.

239. Shivaji—Shivaji Maharaj (1627–80), founder of the Maratha kingdom in the Deccan, which, after his death, grew to the largest kingdom besides the already crumbling Mughal Empire in the subcontinent. Shivaji had carved his state from the southern flanks of the Mughal Empire. It was an early attempt at a national state of the Marathas, and its king, Shivaji, therefore became the hero of the Maratha nationalistic revival in the nineteenth century. Shivaji is one of the often-depicted national heroes of India. His life history was made into a story of self-sacrificing struggle and chivalry, interwoven with stereotypes of traditional heroes' vitae.

Ravi Varma painted several pictures of Shivaji, the most famous picture being of Shivaji as horseman in white robes on a black stallion. The Ravi Varma Press issued a series of pictures of the heroic and adventurous exploits of Shivaji.

240. Harischandra—A king in Indian mythology famed for his offering of 'gold, his own son, his wife, body, life, kingdom and fortune' to Vishvamitra and the gods. This theme was particularly popular in stage plays and it was the very first material for an Indian full-length film which, under the title *Raja Harischandra*, was made by Dadasaheb Phalke in 1913. Ravi Varma depicted several of the dramatic occurrences of *Raja Harischandra* in paintings, most of which were also printed in the Ravi Varma Press (*see also* Note 8).

241. Durandhar—Mahadev Visvanath Dhurandhar (1867–1944). During his time, one of the most popular painters of religious themes. He was also a much sought-after advertisement artist. Dhurandhar was trained in the J.J. School of Arts, where he later became an art teacher. Dhurandhar had some of his pictures lithographed in Germany and later many of his designs were printed in the Ravi Varma Press. Some of his advertisements were printed on calendars and became some of the most popular visuals in India.

242. *See* Note 78.

243. Id.

244. Grey beard and cheerful countenance—This must be the portrait of Sir Dadabhai Naoroji.

245. Mhatre—Ganpatrao Kashinath Mhatre was a student in the J.J. School of Arts where he produced a semi-life-size sculpture of a young Maratha woman entitled *To the Temple*. This sculpture created a sensation in 1896,

when it got enthusiastic reviews in the Indian papers. Ravi Varma had several detailed photographs of this and other sculptures of Mhatre in his possession.

246. *See* Note 220.

247. *See* Note 105.

248. The Malayali biographies, including Nayar's book, were translated from Malayalam for the authors by Mr Lal Lukose, Trivandrum.

249. *See* Note 130.

250. Ravi Varma and Raja Varma were invited to Mysore during the reign of Chamarajendra Wadiyar in 1885, and were then engaged for more than three months to paint portraits of the Maharaja and members of his family.

251. A Xerox-copy of several letters from the palace archives in Mysore, concerning the communication between state officials in charge of Ravi Varma's stay in Mysore during the years 1904 and 1905, was kindly given to the authors by Mr R. Nandakumar, Trivandrum (Nandakumar, R. 1995: 41–89).

252. *See* Plate 23.

253. *See* Notes 2 and 232.

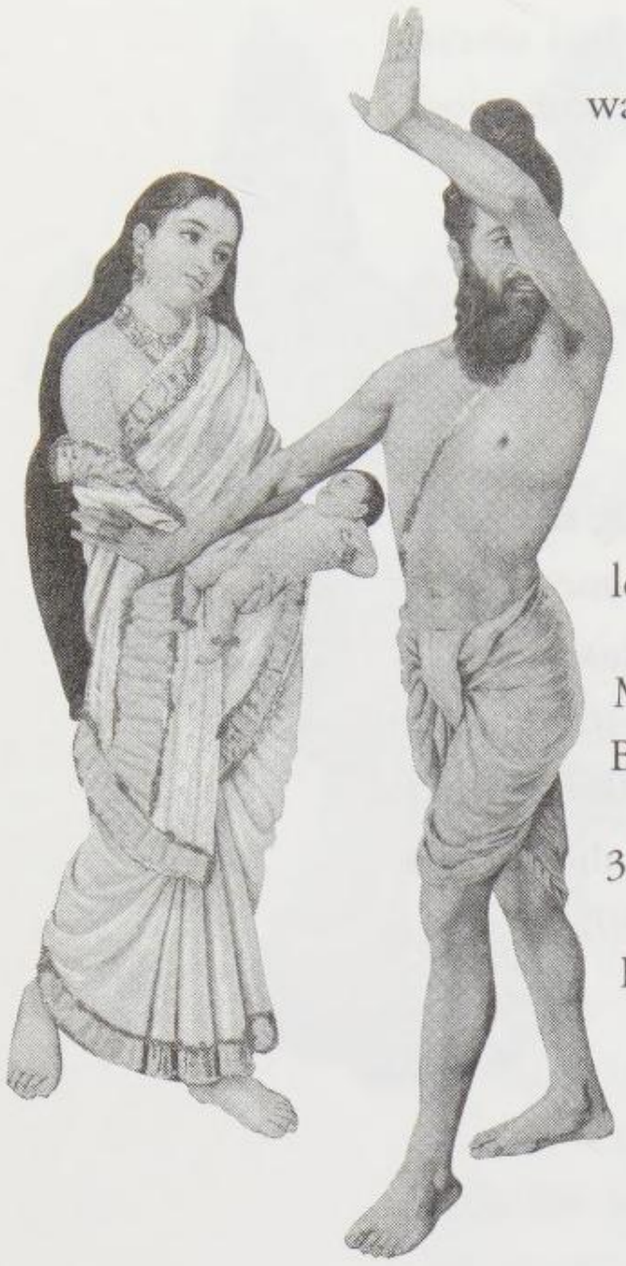
254. The nine paintings are:

Sethubandanam (Rama vanquishes the Ocean)
Damayanti and the Swan (After the Message)
Bishma's Vow or *Matsyagandi*
The Servitude of Sairandhri
Sri Rama breaks the Bow (1906)
Ravana fights Jatayu (1906)
Victory of Indrajit (1905)
Krishna as Envoy
Krishna and Balaram liberating their Parents (*see also* Chronology, 1905).

255. Khedda operation—Trapping of wild elephants to train them for service in the logging business and other services. The Khedda was organized by the state. This operation was staged as an extravaganza for the visiting Prince of Wales.

256. Ayurvedic treatment—Treatment according to the traditional Indian medical system (*see also* Note 231).

257. Ravi Varma's death—In the night of 18 August 1906, Ravi Varma was taken down by a severe fever, and Asst. Surgeon Narayan Pillay treated him for bronchitis. A few days later, a carbuncle of the size of an 'ordinary mango' appeared, which was opened; still the patient was not the better for that. On 27 August his condition got alarming, and Kerala Varma—who got a daily medical report from the surgeon—noted that 'artist Ravi Varma is gradually sinking'. On 3 October the entry in the diary states: 'the telegram of Asst. Surgeon Narayan Pillay...conveyed the very melancholy news of Artist Ravi Varma's death which occurred at 2 p.m. yesterday' (Diary for 1906 of H.H. Kerala Varma Koil Thampuran; unpublished).



258. Ravi Varma Raja—Son of Mangalabai Thampuratty, who was to become a famous painter himself.

259. Kadambari is the heroine of a novel of the same name by the famous poet Bana, who spent a long span of his colourful life at the court of King Harsha (AD 606–47). It is a story of the lovers Kadambari and Candrapida, of lovers' desire and melancholy. Ravi Varma issued several prints of women musicians under that title.

260. After Ravi Varma's death, Ampthill sent a condolence letter to Rama Varma, the son of the painter:

Milton Ernest Hall
Bedford

3rd December 1906

Dear Mr Rama Varma,

I greatly appreciate your kind thought in writing to me about your father's death, as I was anxious for personal news after I had seen the sad announcement in the news-papers. It came as a great shock to me and caused me a very real pang, for I had, as you know, much affection and the highest regard for your father. A more gentle, kindly, courteous nature I have never known, and added to that there were the lofty ideas and pure motives which inspired him in the art to which he devoted his life with so much resultant benefit to Indian life. It would be difficult to overestimate the influence for good which your father's paintings, widely popularized as they were, had among all kinds and conditions of your country-men. They spread a refined taste in art and they must have done much to influence religious thought. I am truly sad to think that I shall never see him again on this earth. Please accept the expression of my sincere condolence and sympathy with you in your loss and grief.

I am glad to hear that you intend to follow in your father's foot-steps and I hope that you will keep up the honour of his name by winning an equal reputation of your own.

It would be a great pleasure to me to hear from you if you ever felt inclined to write and I note with satisfaction that it is as a masonic brother that you have addressed me.

Believe me,
Yours truly and fraternally
Sig. Ampthill
(Pillay, K., 1954: 86–7).

Plates

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Gayathri Varma and Satheesan Thampuran (Ernakulam) for Plates 1D; 4B; 5A, B, C, D; 6A; 13B;

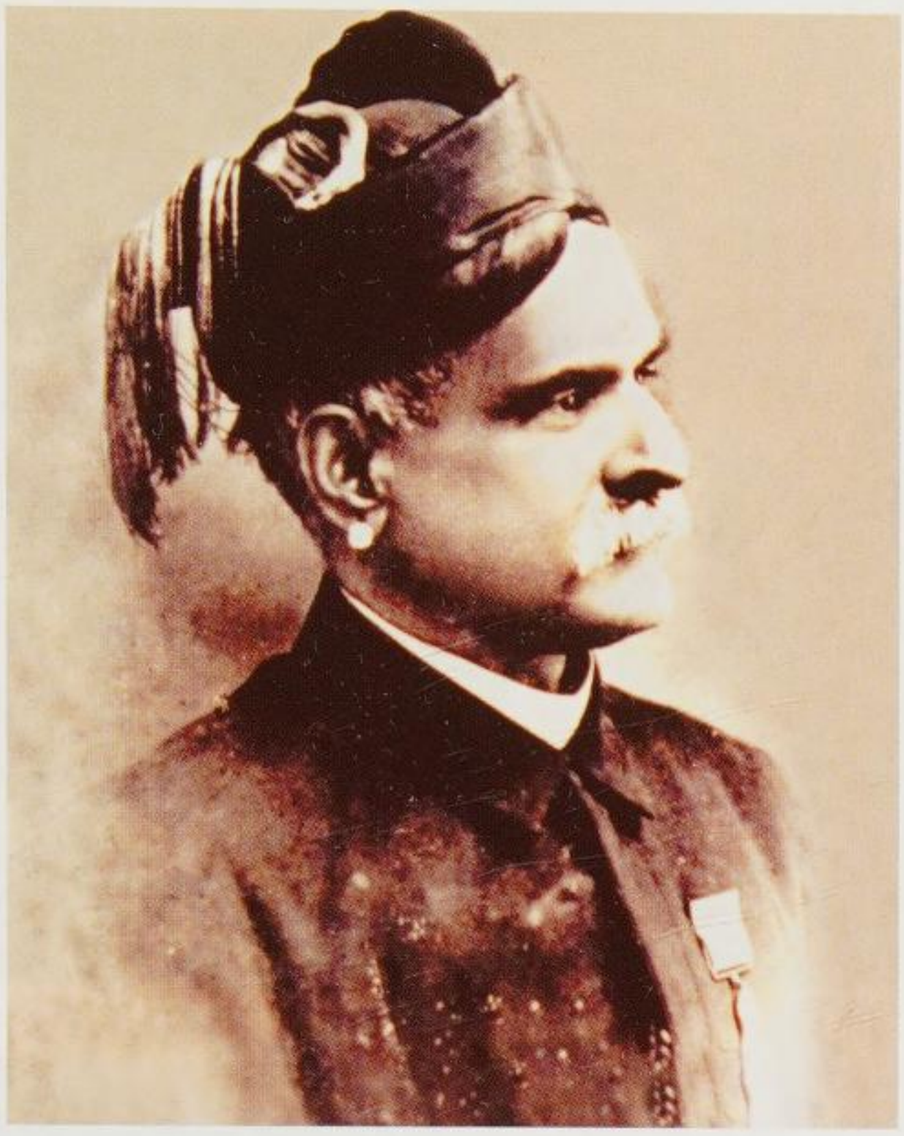
Saraswati and R. Partasarathi Varma (Mavelikara) for Plates 9B; 13A; 18A, B; 22A, B; 23B, C, D; 27C; 28A; 37B, C; 42A, B, C; 44A, B, C, D; 45A, B, C, D; 47A, C; 48B, C; 49B, D;

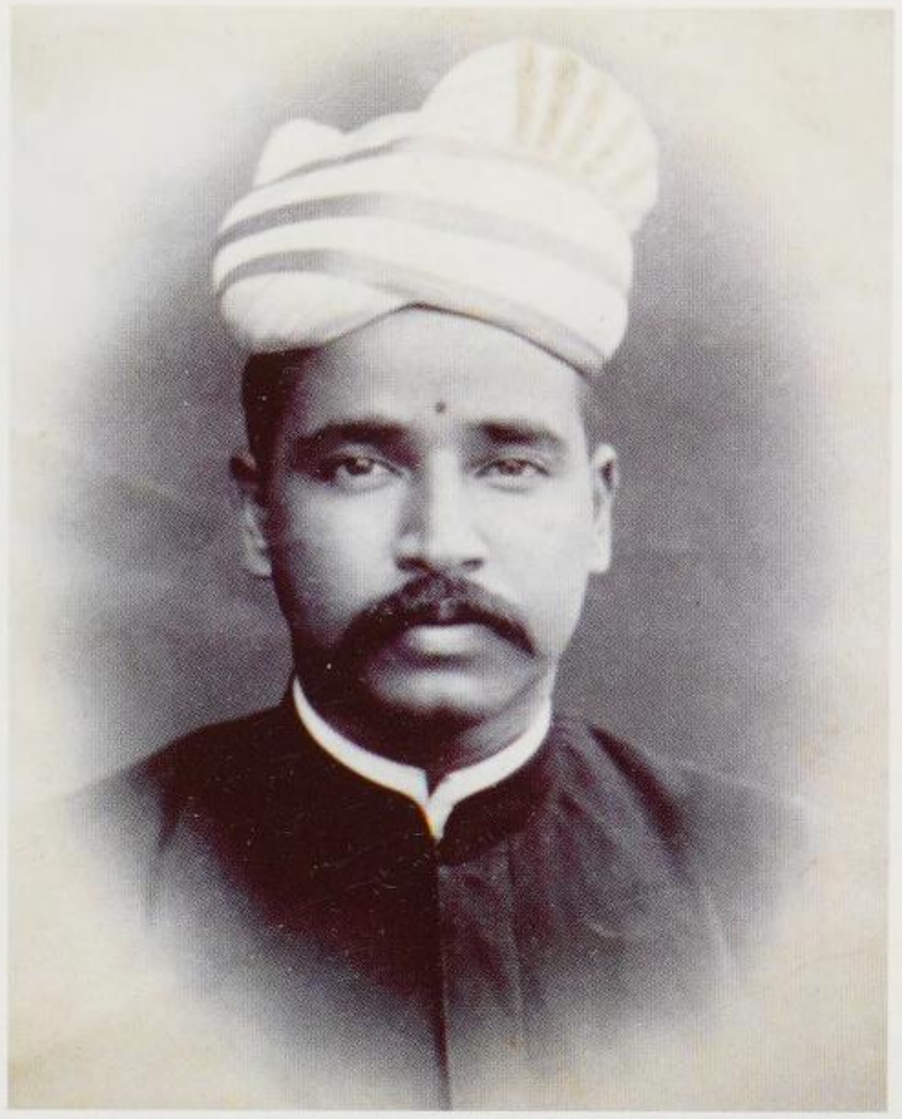
Dr Peter Sahu (Malavli) for Plates 20C; 29A, B; 31B, C; 37A; 46C;

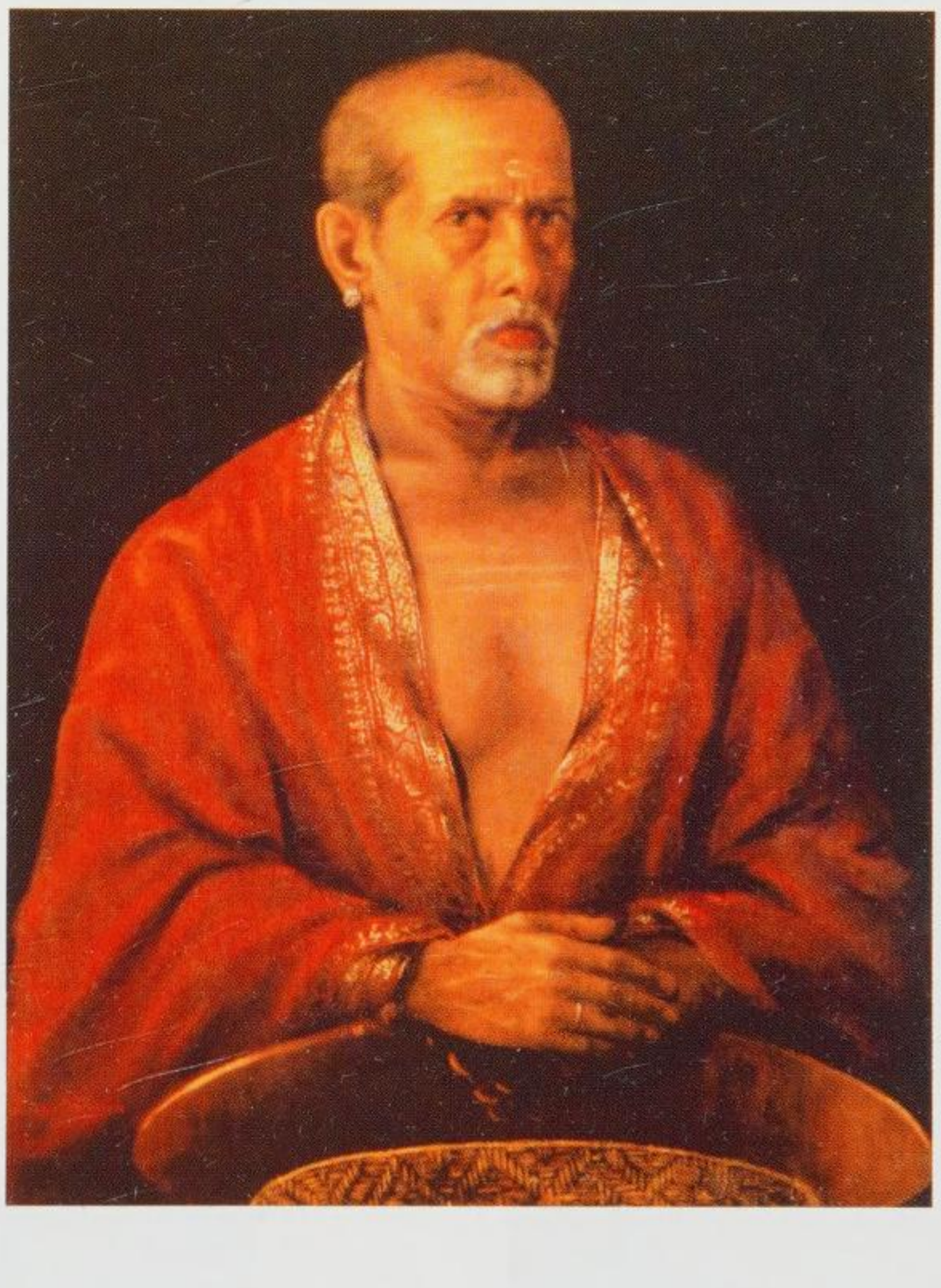
The Modern Art Gallery (Chennai) for Plates 6D; 14D;

The Kovdiah Palace (Thiruvananthapuram) for Plate 37D;

All other visual material is from the collection of the authors.







A B
C D

Plate 1:

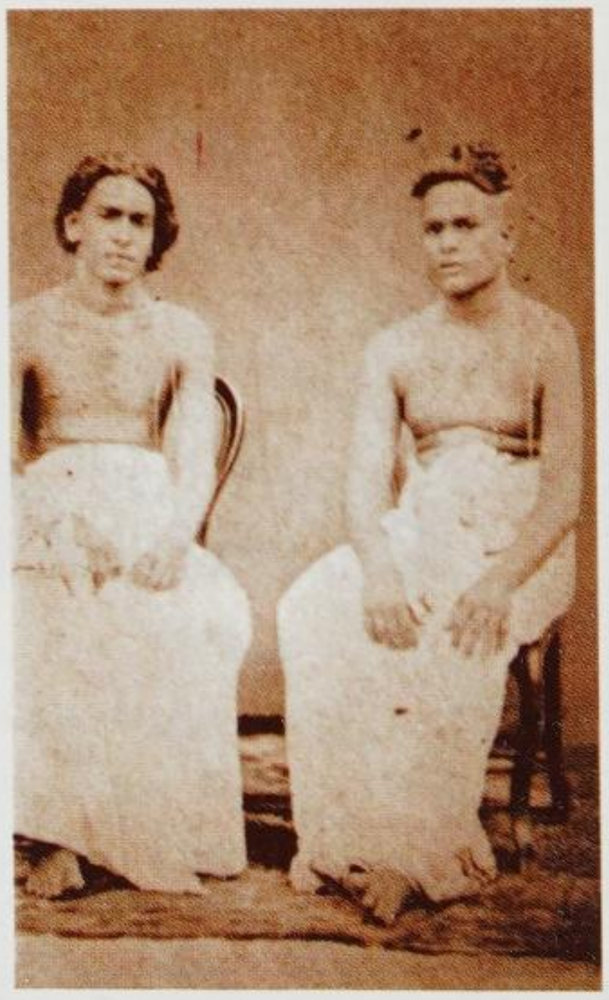
A. Raja Ravi Varma wearing the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal. Photograph, 1904.

B. C. Raja Raja Varma, youngest brother of Ravi Varma and the author of the diary. Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1900).

C. Sir T. Madhava Rao, Prime Minister of Travancore and later of Baroda, political preceptor of Ravi Varma. Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1880).

D. Raja Raja Varma, Ravi Varma's maternal uncle and first art teacher. Painting by Ravi Varma, n.d. (*c.* 1883).

UMA AMBABAI THAMPURATY



A B
C
D E

Plate 2:

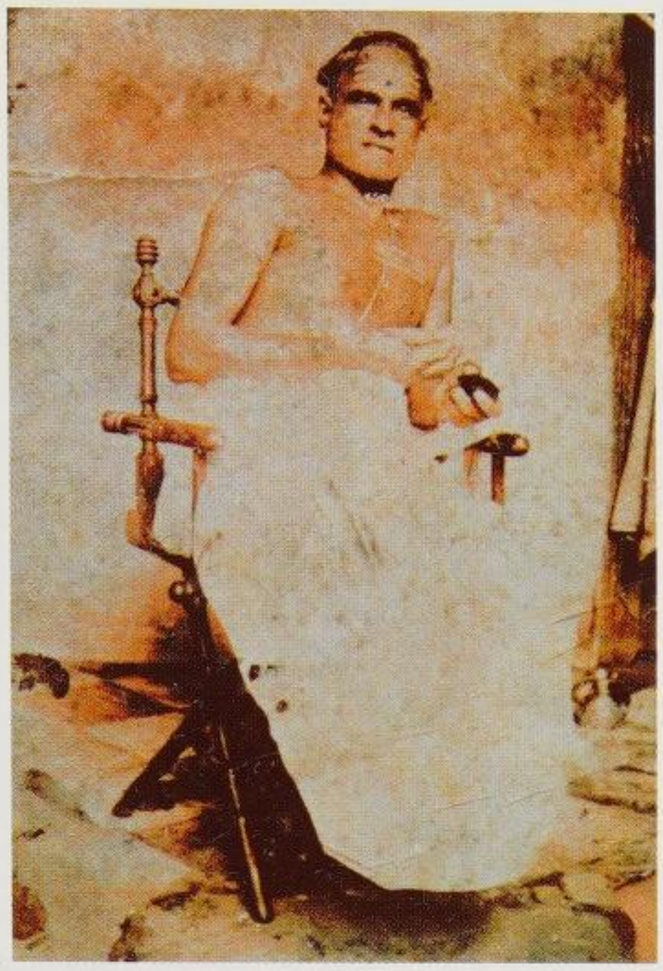
A. Uma Ambabai Thampuratty, mother of the Varma brothers. Photograph of a painting by Ravi Varma, n.d. (*c.* 1875).

B. Unidentified Kochu Koil Thampuran and child, possibly Ravi Varma. Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1880).

C. Bhagirathi, Pooruruttati Nal Thampuratty of Mavelikara, Ravi Varma's wife. Pencil sketch by her son Rama Varma after an oil painting by Ravi Varma from 1880. Sketch n.d. (*c.* 1920).

D. Ravi Varma, Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1880).

E. Two young members of the Kilimanur family, possibly C. Raja Raja Varma and one of his cousins. Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1880).



A B
C D
E

Plate 3:

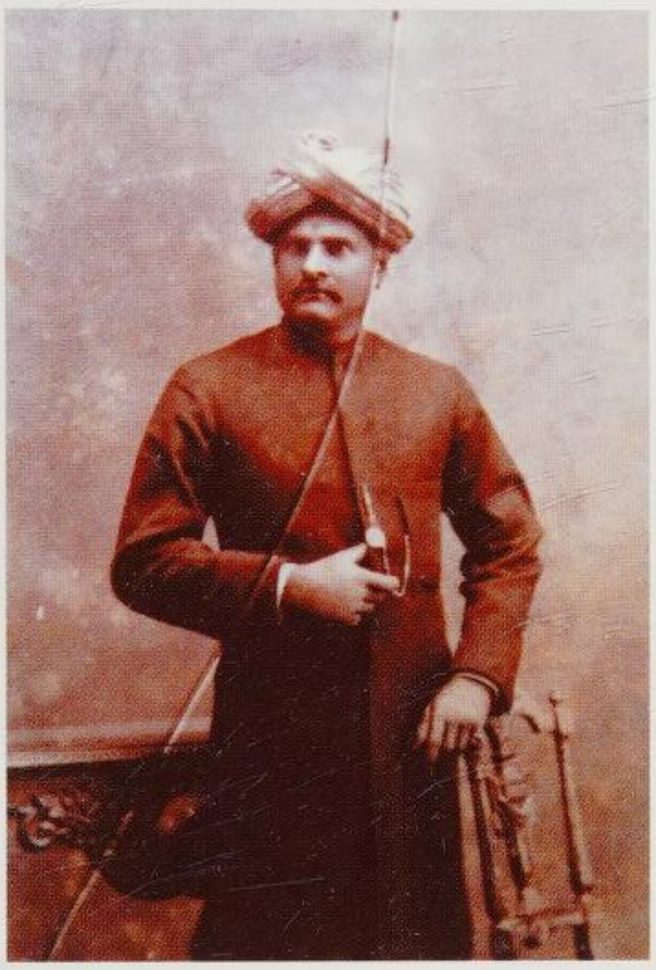
A. Ravi Varma
in a deck chair, taking snuff.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1890).

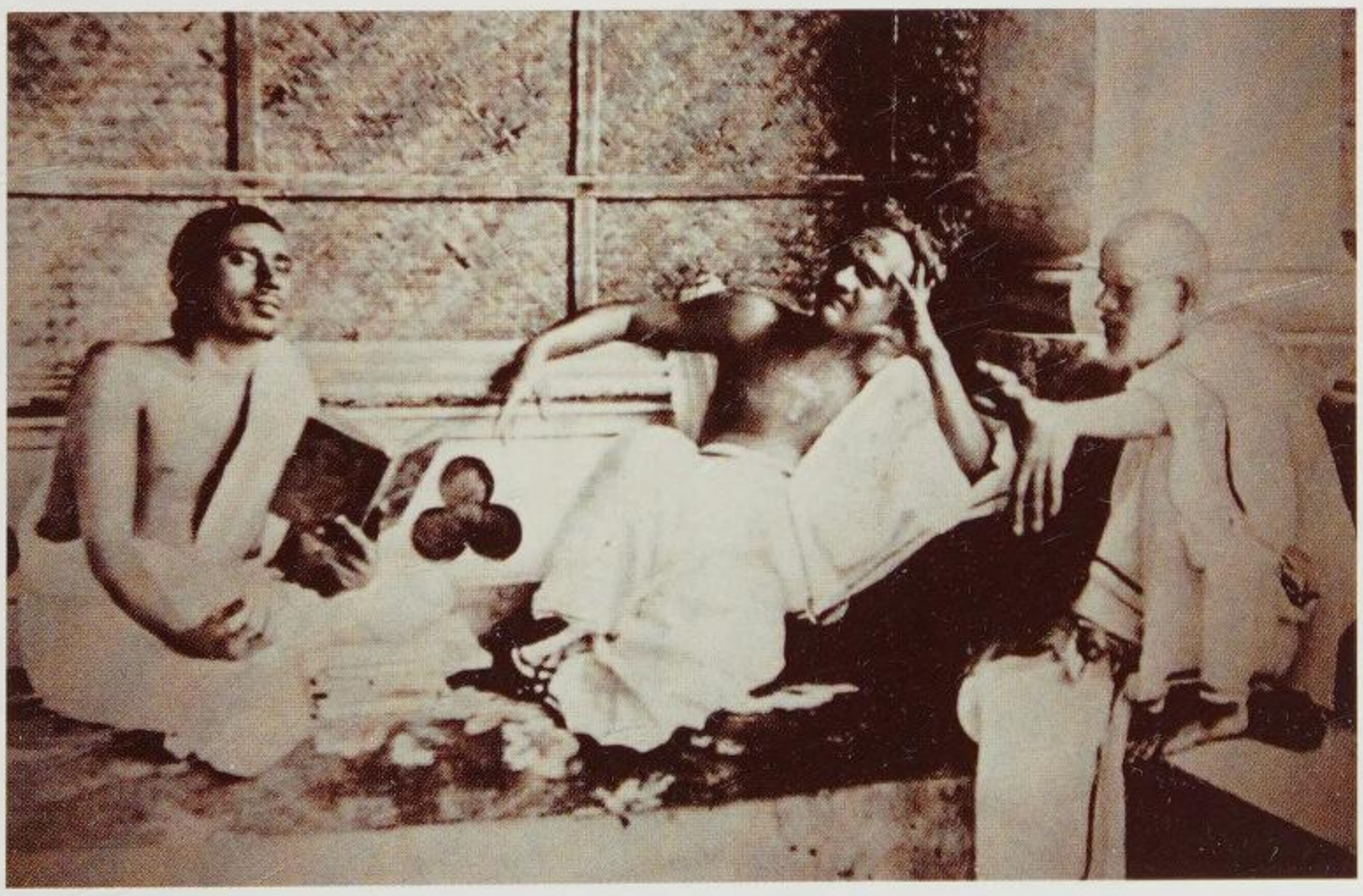
B. Ravi Varma.
Official portrait after the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal was conferred on him.
Photograph, 1904.

C. Ravi Varma
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1890).

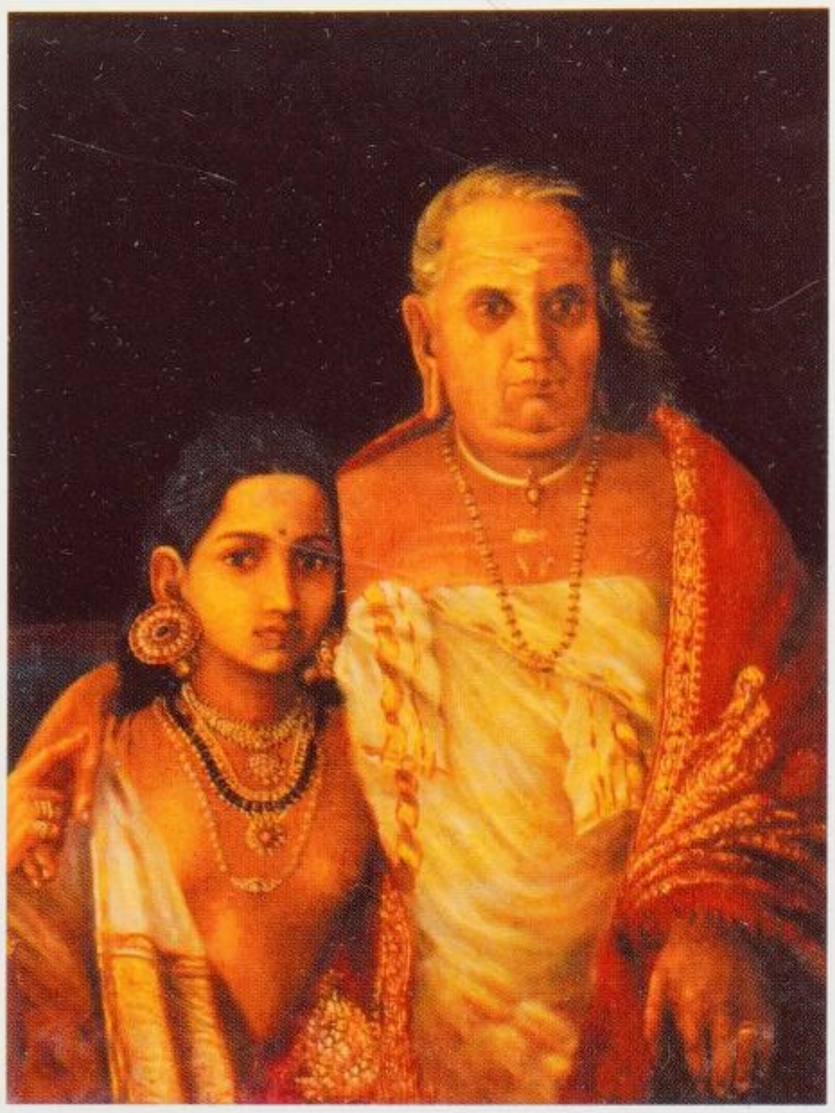
D. Ravi Varma
as gentleman-painter posing before a portrait of the Nizam of Hyderabad.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1902).

E. Ravi Varma
and friends enjoying the recital of classical texts.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1900).





Ravi Varma.
1896



A
B
C D

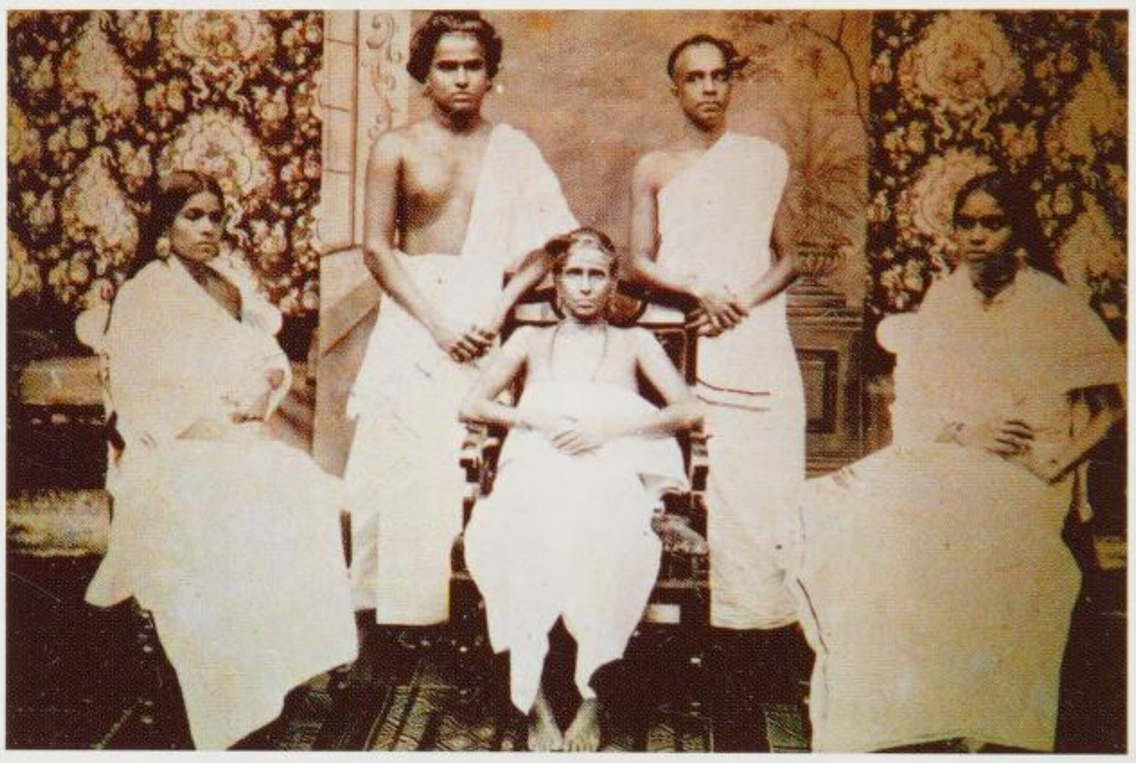
Plate 4:

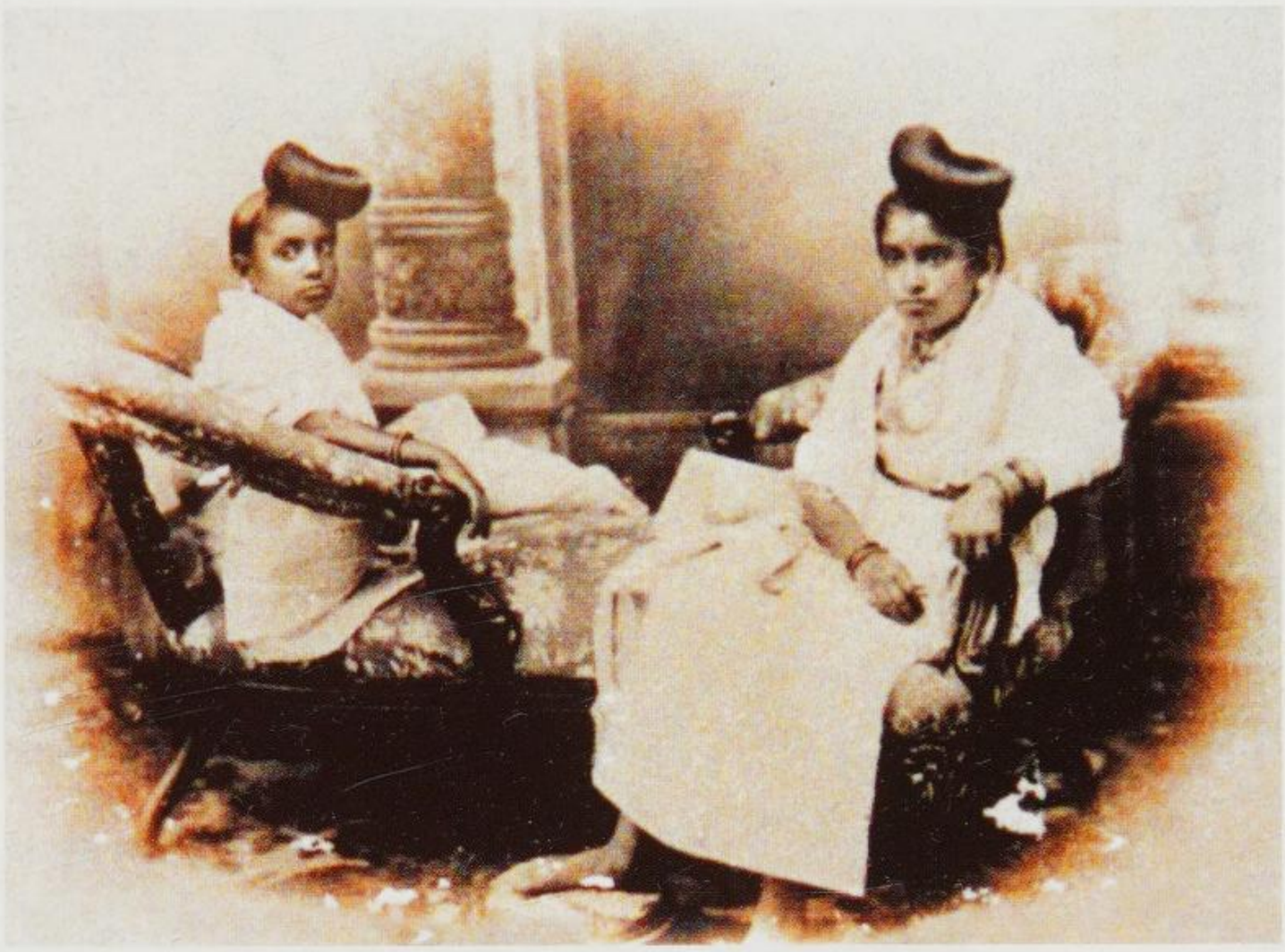
A. *Amma Koil Thampuran.*
Portrait of a matron from the
Mavelikara court and her niece.
Painting by Ravi Varma, n.d. (*c.* 1880).

B. Matron and family members.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1900).

C. Pooruruttati Nal Thampuratty,
Ravi Varma's wife and one of her
daughters. Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1880).

D. Ravi Varma before the easel.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1900).





A
B
C D

Plate 5:

A. Rani Sethu Parvatibai and Rani Sethu Lakshmibai, the granddaughters of Ravi Varma, adopted as princesses into the royal lineage of Travancore. Photograph (*c.* 1898).

B. The Ranis as teenagers. Photograph (*c.* 1906).

C. Pooruruttati Nal Thampuratty of Mavelikara(?), Ravi Varma's wife. Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1870).

D. Ladies in traditional attire, the left-most might be Ravi Varma's wife. Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1870).

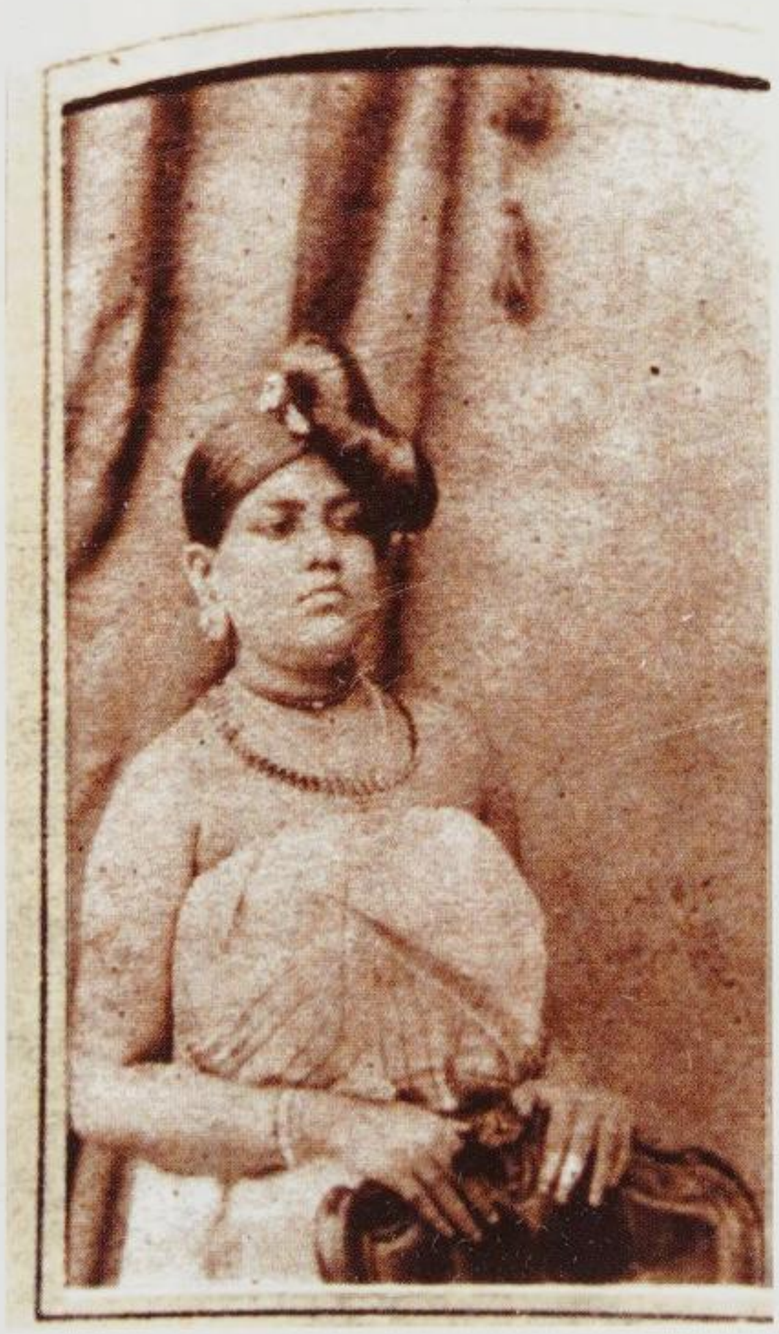


Plate 6:

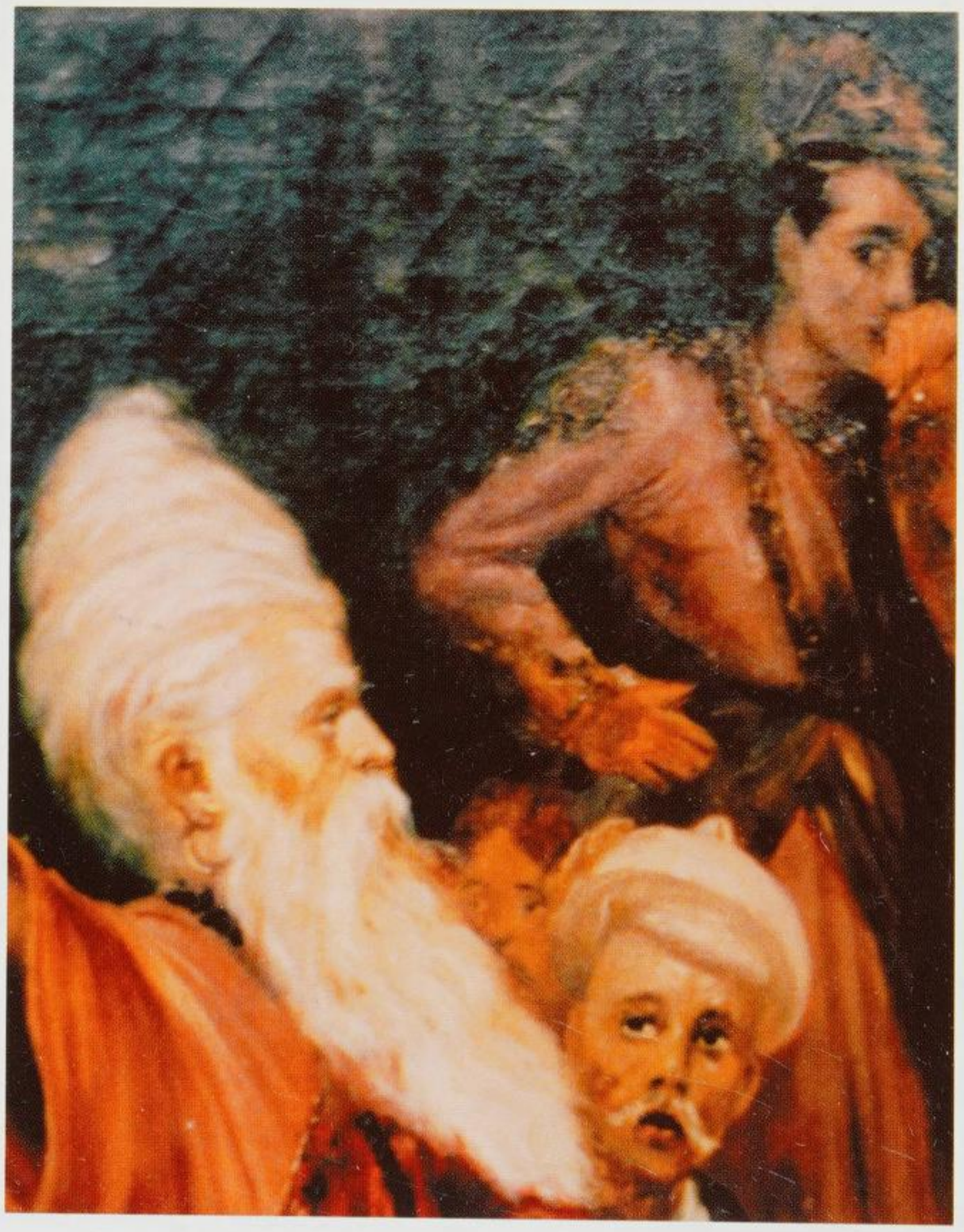
A. Kizhakke Palat Krishna Menon and his family. The earliest known portrait by Ravi Varma, painted on his return from the pilgrimage to the Mookhambika Temple in 1870.

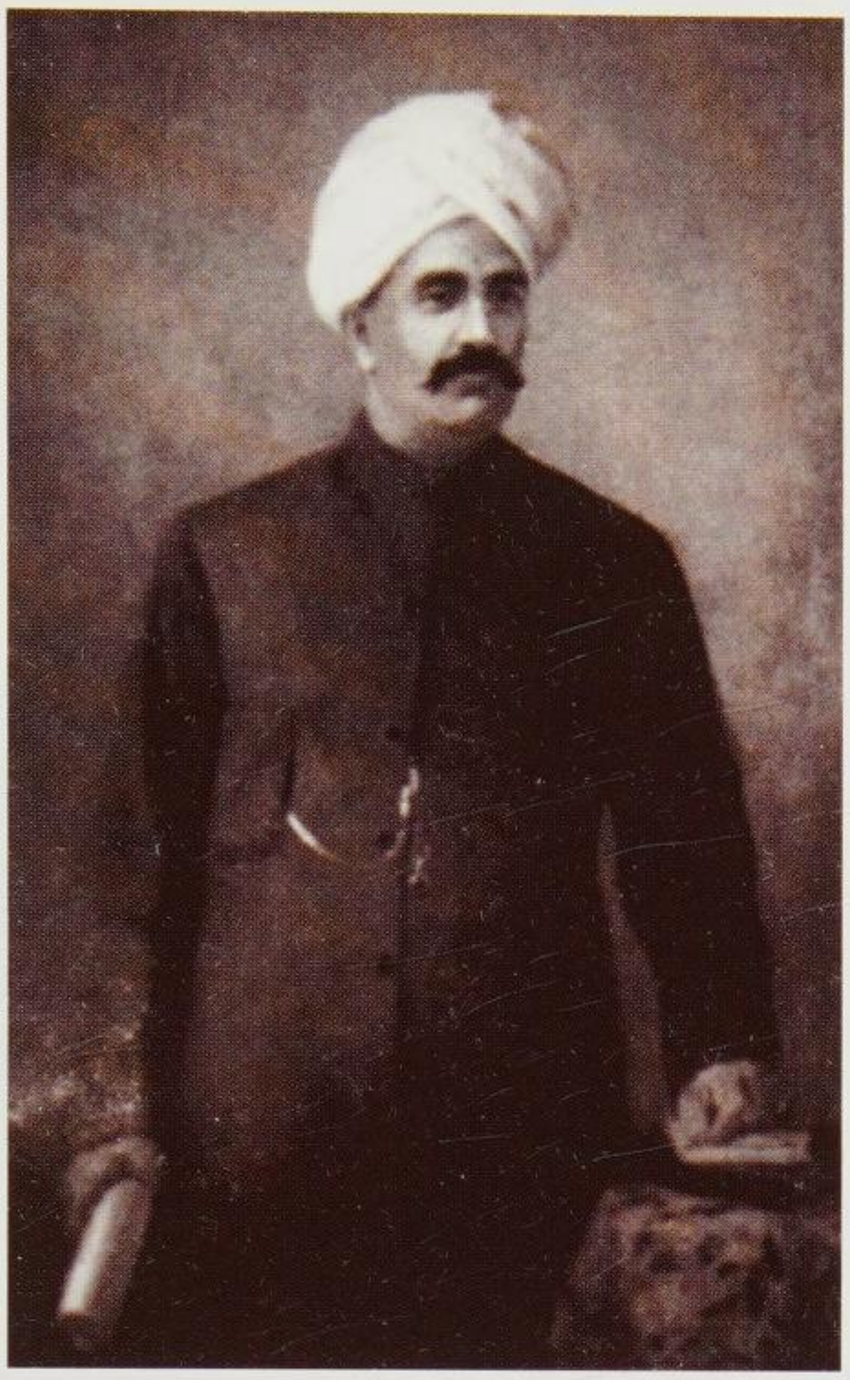
B. A photograph of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, belonging to Ravi Varma. Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1890).

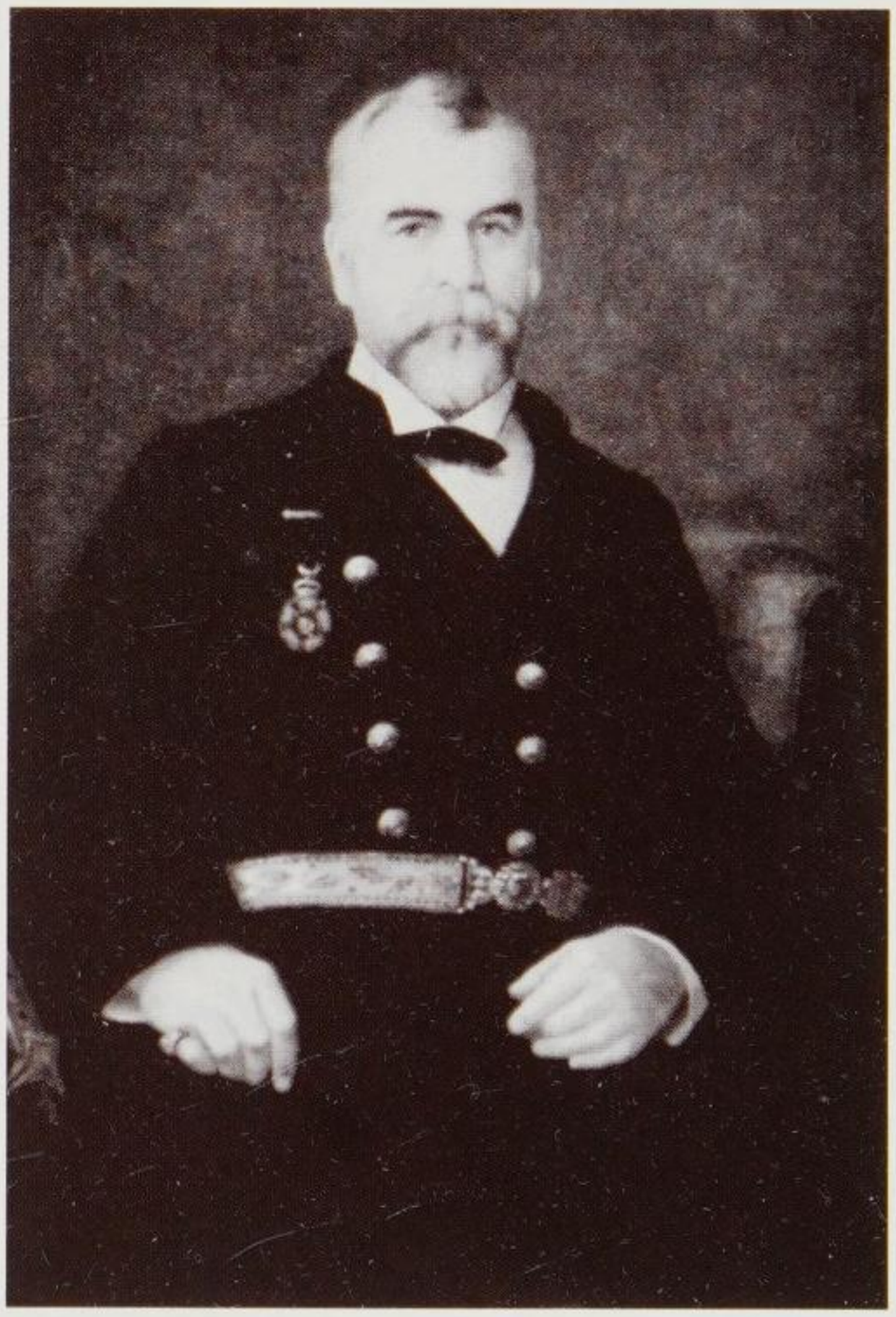
C. Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Lithography published by the Ravi Varma Press, the print bears the impression 'Hon. Bal Gangadhar Tilak' and 'A.K. Joshi & Co., Kalbadevi Road, Bombay, Agent for Ravi Varma Pictures'. Lithograph by Ravi Varma Press, Bombay; n.d. (*c.* 1900).

D. Detail from the painting *Vishvamitra at the court of Dasharath* by Dhurandhar, dated 1900. Dhurandhar used the features of Tilak in the figure of the counsellor.

A
D B
C







A B
C
D

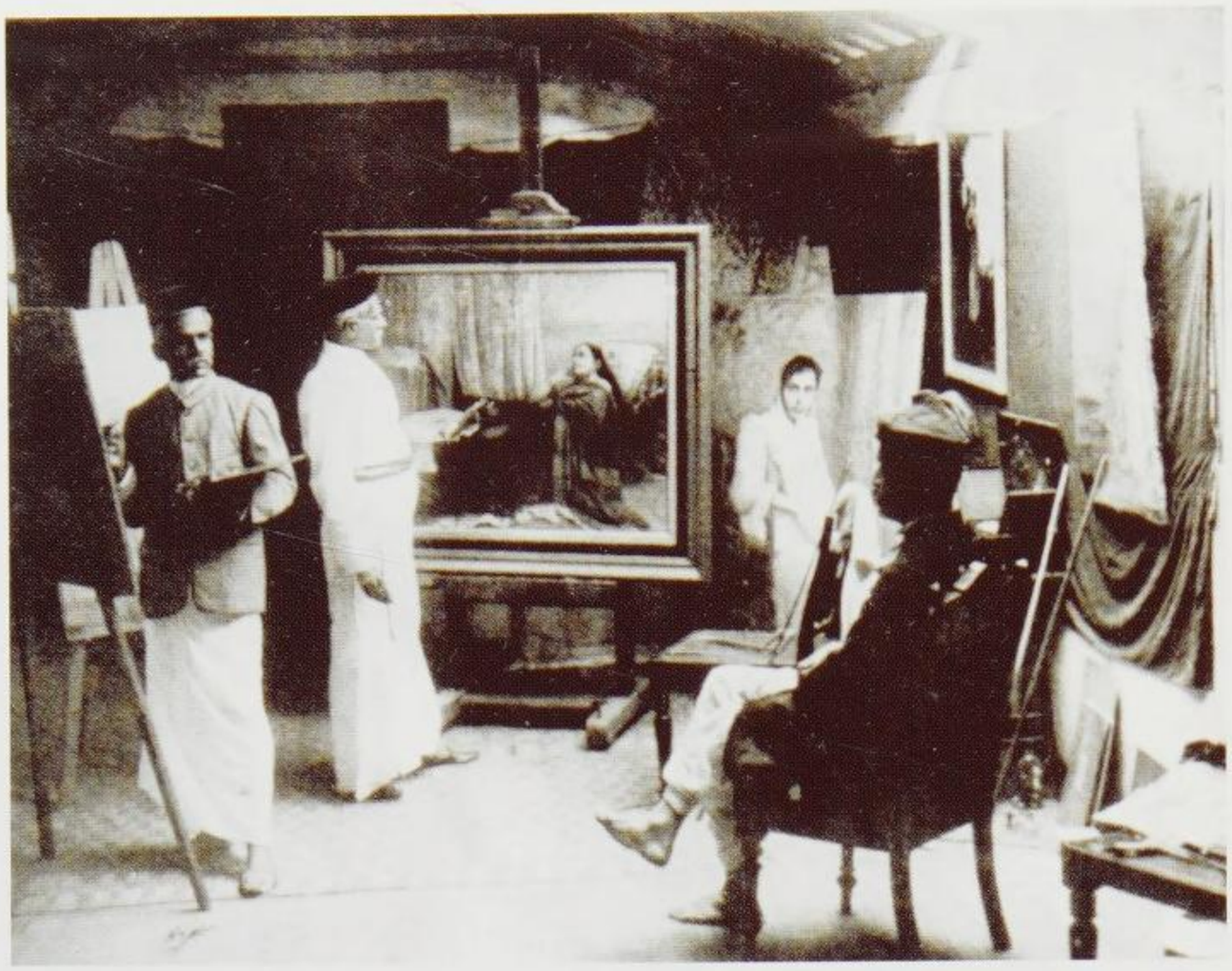
Plate 7:

A. Ramanath Rao.
Painting by Ravi Varma, 1896.

B. Ramanath Rao and family.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1900).
Ravi Varma painted several portraits of the members of Ramanath Rao's family.

C. The daughters of Ramanath Rao.
Watercolour painting by Ravi Varma, postcard with the legend: 'To Raja Ravi Varma with grateful compliments, Rama R. Rao, 13 January 05.'

D. H.B. Grigg, the British Resident at Travancore. Grigg, British administrator in Travancore and patron of Ravi Varma, proposed the project of an art gallery in Travancore for the first time.



A
B C
D

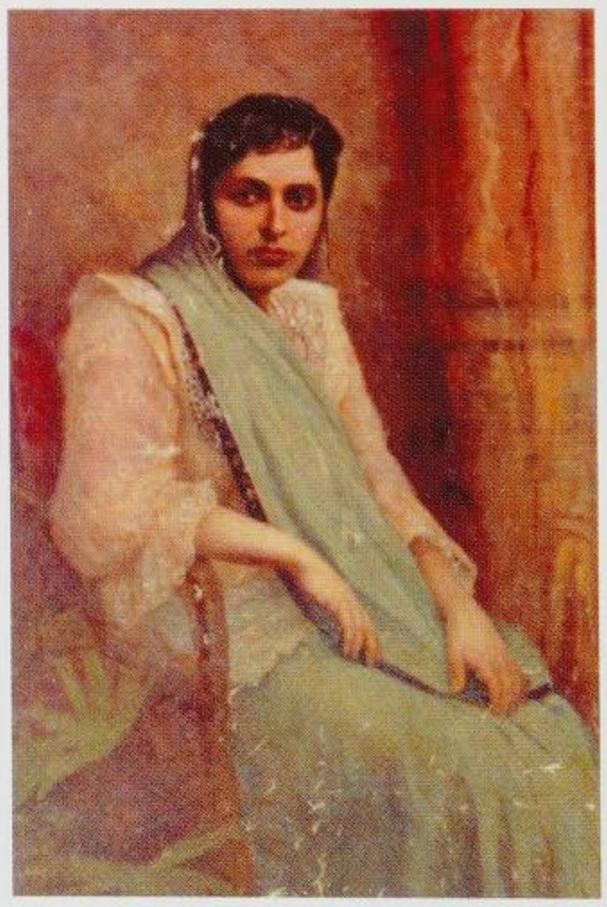
Plate 8:

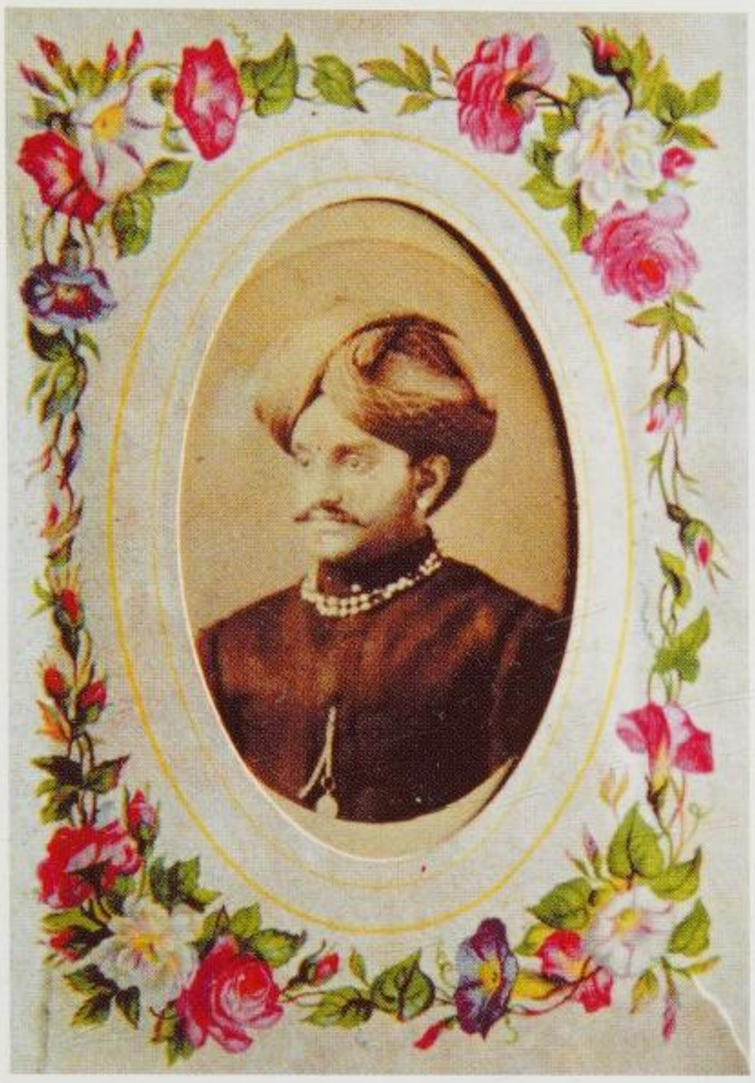
A. Raja Ravi Varma and his brother C. Raja Raja Varma at work in their Girgaum Studio in Bombay, 1894.

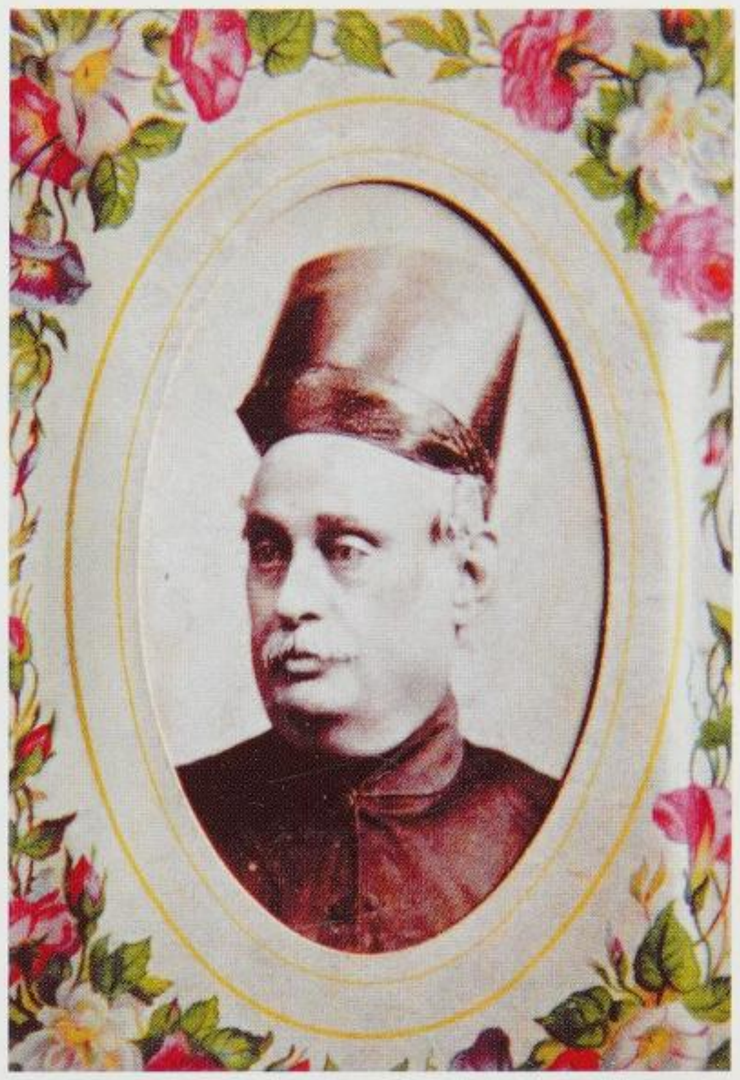
B. The artist in his studio. Pencil sketch by Ravi Varma, n.d. (*c.* 1890).

C. Sketch for the painting before which Ravi Varma is seen standing in A., and the tracing of a head on transparent paper, found tucked in one of the volumes of Ravi Varma's library. Watercolour on photograph, 1893.

D. Painting of a young woman. The painting is visible on the right in the studio scene in A. The woman appears in several paintings by C. Raja Raja Varma.







A B C
D

Plate 9:

Ravi Varma owned a number of photographs of persons whose portraits he intended to paint. Indeed, the painted portraits were in many cases renderings of photographs into oil paintings. It seems Ravi Varma and his brother made several watercolour studies from the photographs before they worked on canvas on the portraits during sittings.

A. Chamarajendra Wadiyar,
Maharaja of Mysore.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1885).

B. Sketch of a man from one of
Ravi Varma's scrapbooks, n.d.

C. A Parsee gentleman
possibly Munmohan Ramjee Hora.
Photographers: Bourne & Shepherd,
Photographers Simla, Calcutta, Bombay.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1880).

D. Portrait of the Nizam of Hyderabad.
Watercolour by Ravi Varma from a
photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1901).

A
B C
D

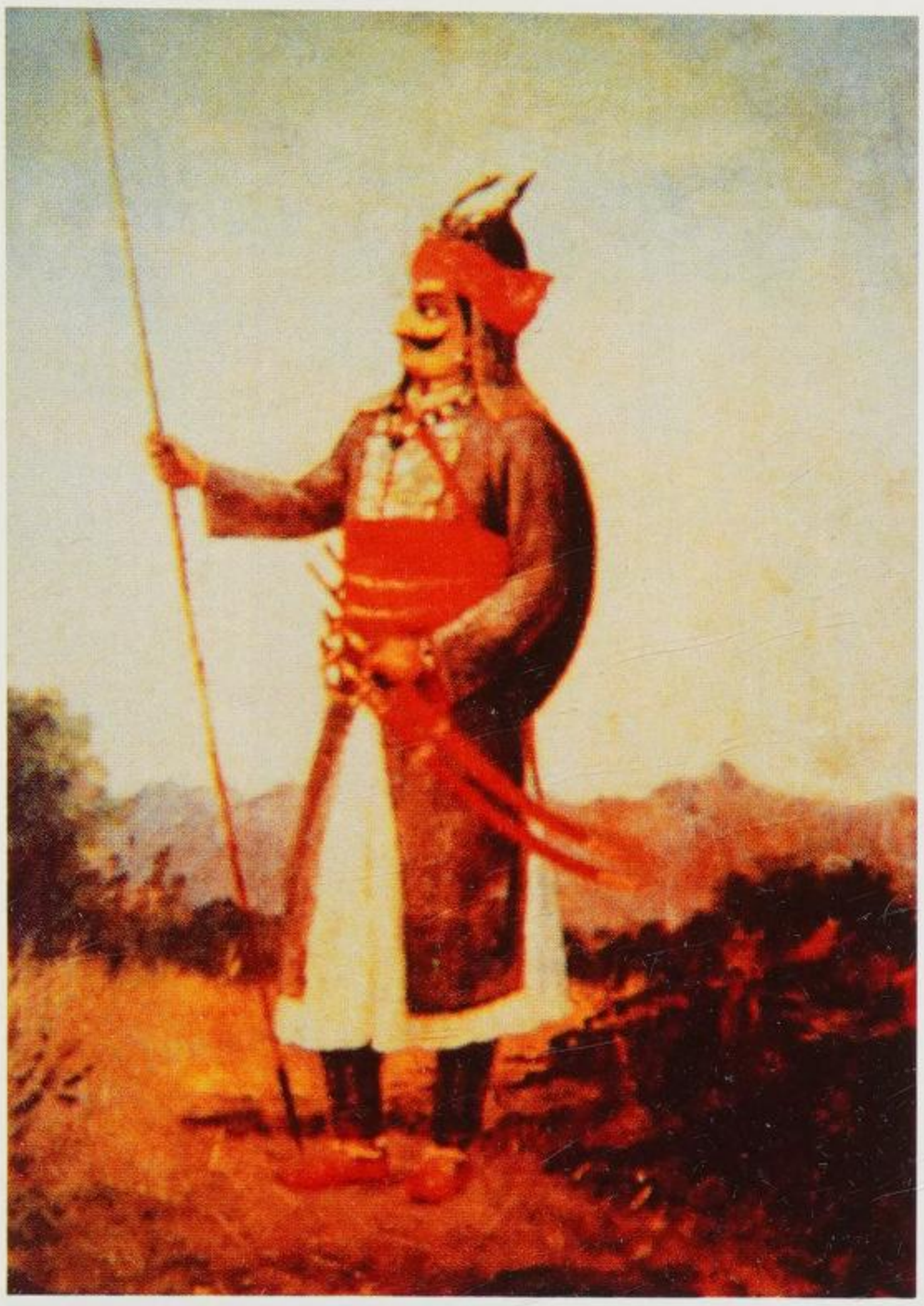
Plate 10:

A. Seth Lachman Das of Mathura.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1895).
(Diary 24 January 1895).

B. The Governor of Madras, Lord Ampthill
in masonic robes. Photograph for one
later painted portrait.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1903).

C. Lady Ampthill and her son.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1903).

D. Aristocrat and child,
possibly Morarjee Goculdas, C.I.E.
Photographer: Bourne & Shepherd,
Calcutta, Simla and Bombay.
Photograph, n.d (*c.* 1900).



A B C D

Plate 11:

During the Varma brothers' stay in Udaipur, the Maharana commissioned a portrait of his ancestor Maharana Pratap Singh. For better historic authenticity, Ravi Varma sketched ancient weapons and armours.

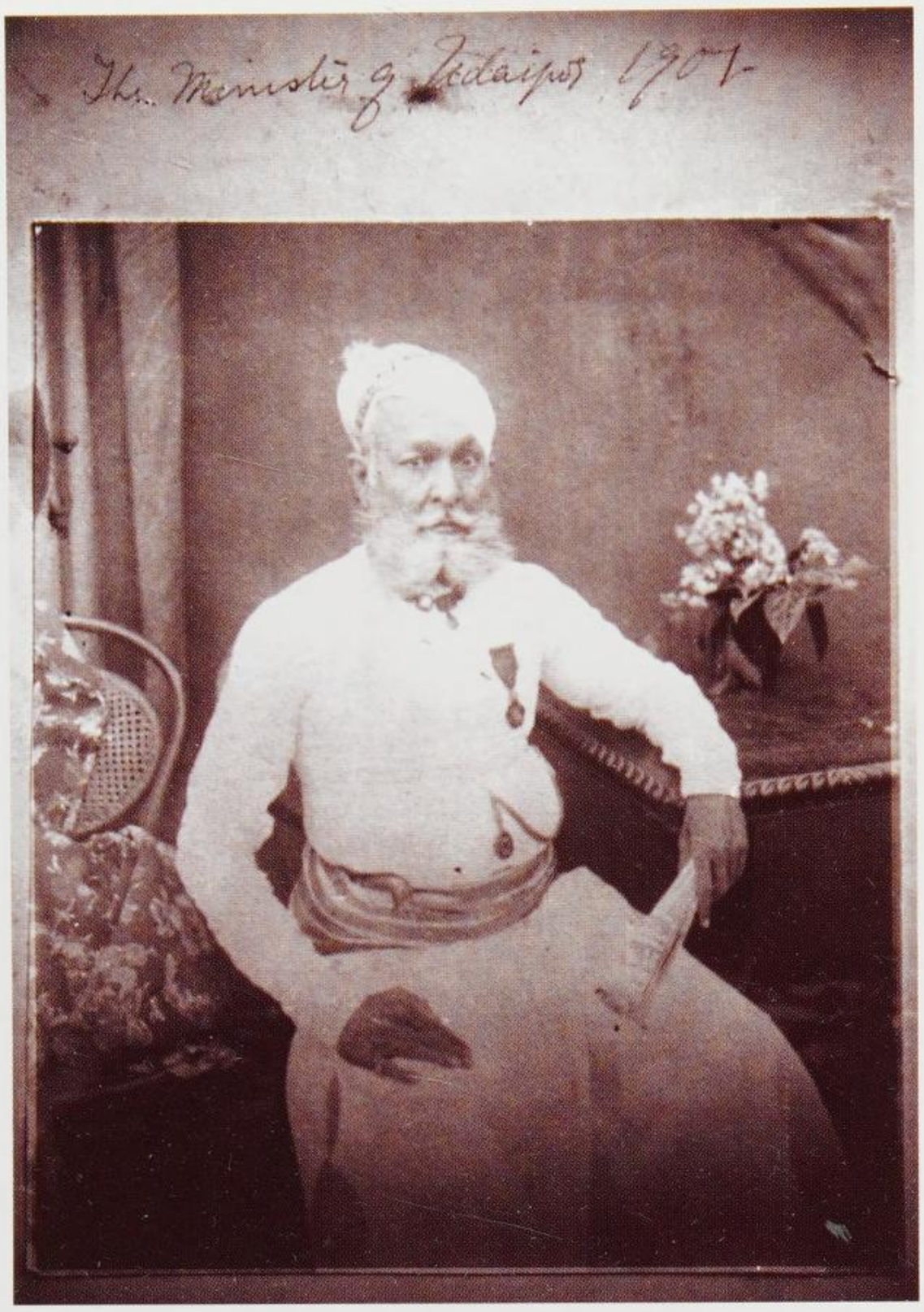
It was during his time that the antagonism of the Rajput kings against the Mughal rule was reinterpreted as an early national freedom struggle.

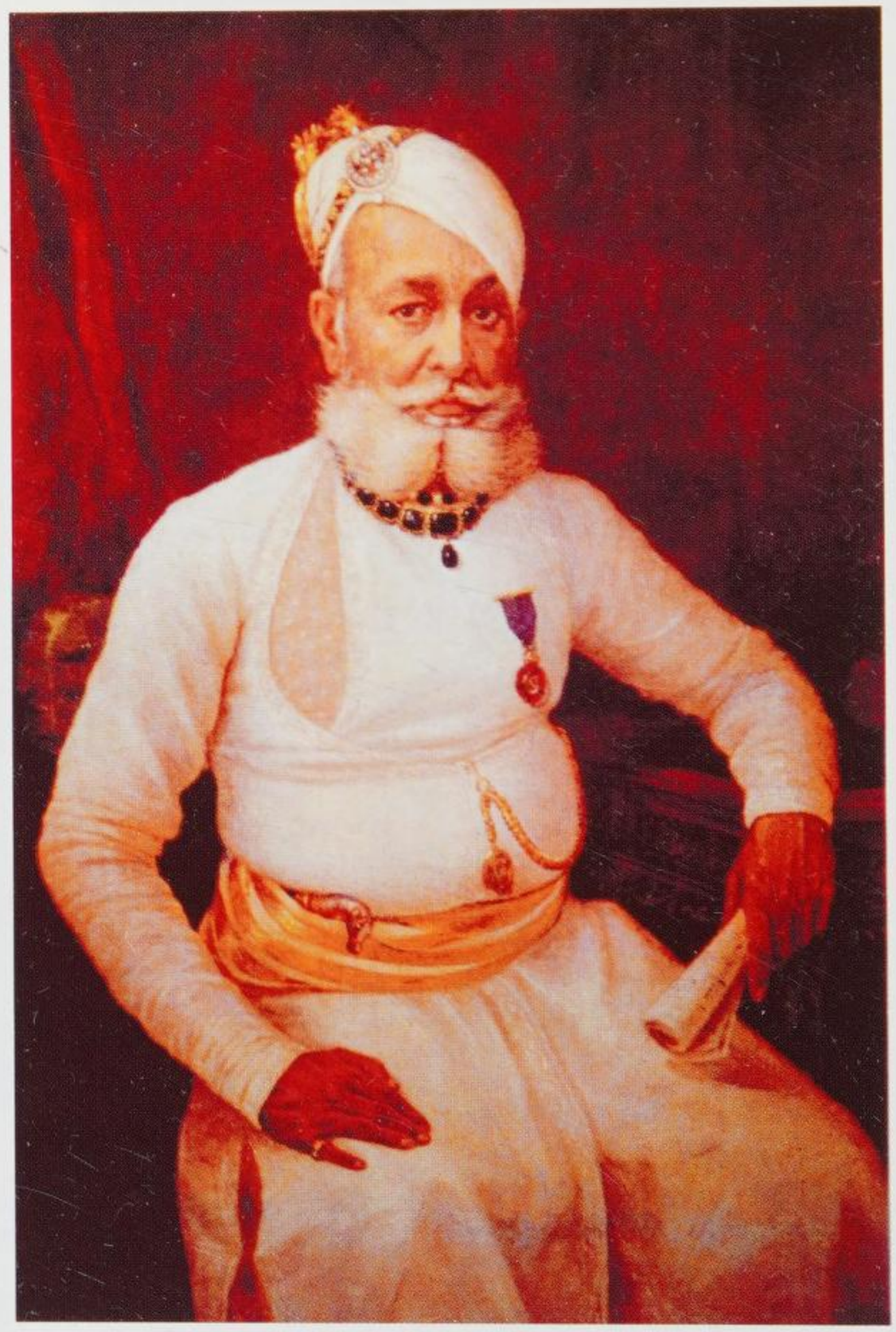
A. *Raja Rana Pratap Singh.*
Oil painting by Ravi Varma, 1901.

B. Sketch of an old helmet, 1901.

C. 'Raja Rana Pratap Singh',
Oleograph after the painting by Ravi Varma from 1901, printed (*c.* 1920).

D. Sketch of a Rajput soldier, 1901.





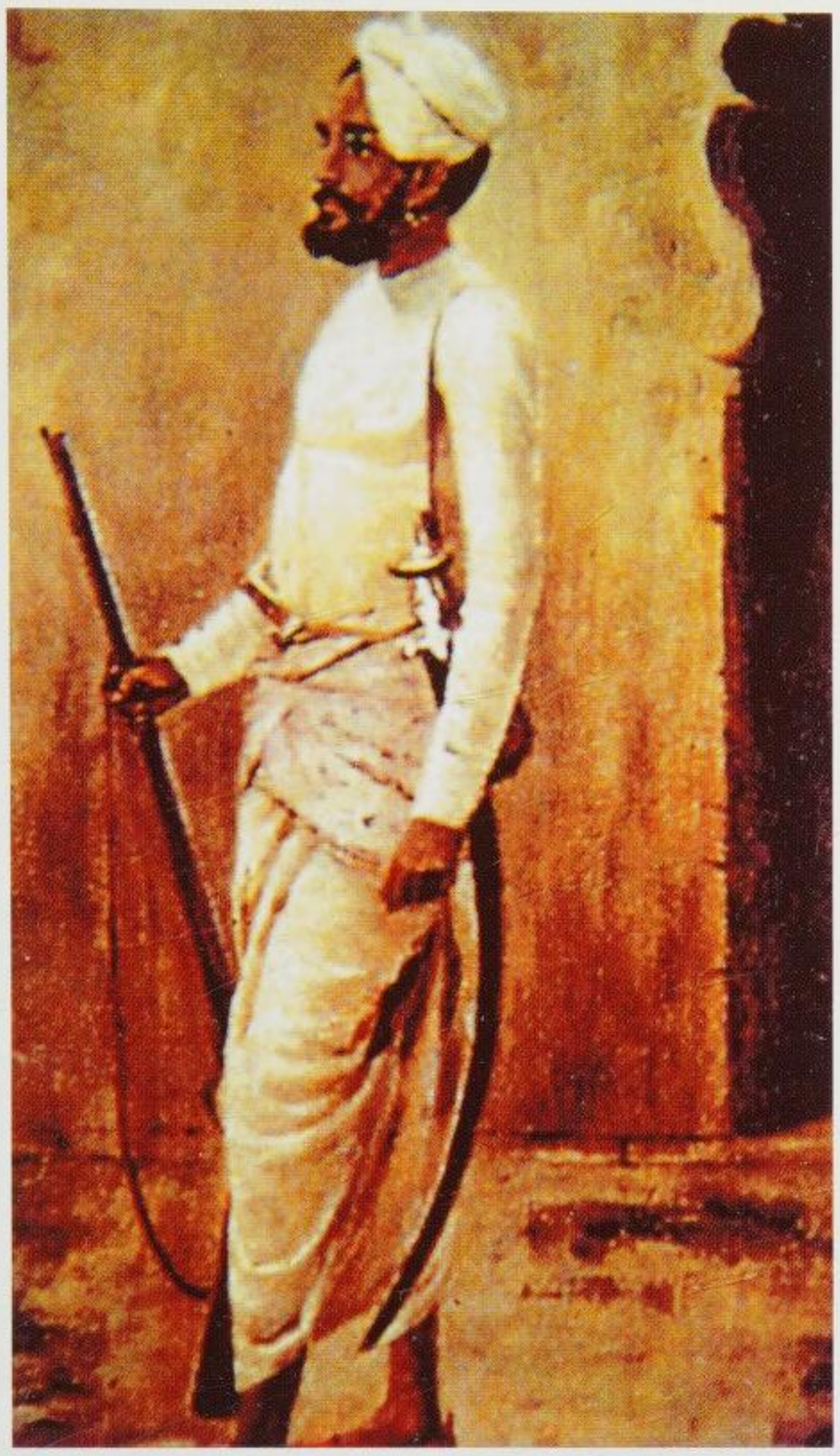
A B
C

Plate 12:

A. The Minister of Udaipur, 1901.
Photograph of Pannelal Mehta, n.d.
(*c.* 1901).

B. British Decoration.
With the portrait photographs, the patrons also sent detailed photographs of the medals and decorations which were to be shown on the commissioned portraits. Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1901)

C. Portrait of Rai Pannelal Mehta of Udaipur '...His features are very regular and his complexion is fair.
He has a dignified and noble air. He was the Dewan of the state for nearly thirty years...'
Oil painting by Ravi Varma, 1901.
(Diary, 25 June 1901).



A
C B

Plate 13:

A. Sketch of a Rajput soldier.
Watercolour sketch, Udaipur, 1901.

B. Fateh Singh, the Maharana of Udaipur.
Photograph of a painting by Ravi Varma (*c.* 1901).

C. Studio photograph of Maharana Fateh Singh, 1901.
The portrait, commissioned in Udaipur is well documented in the diary (see March–July 1901).

The Maharana of Udaipur was not in favour of the academic style of the Varma brothers and therefore asked them to copy some of his ancestors' portraits in traditional style. He also had his reservations about the likeness of a portrait which was done by Ravi Varma from a photograph. Eventually he was persuaded to sit for a portrait in person.

A B

C D

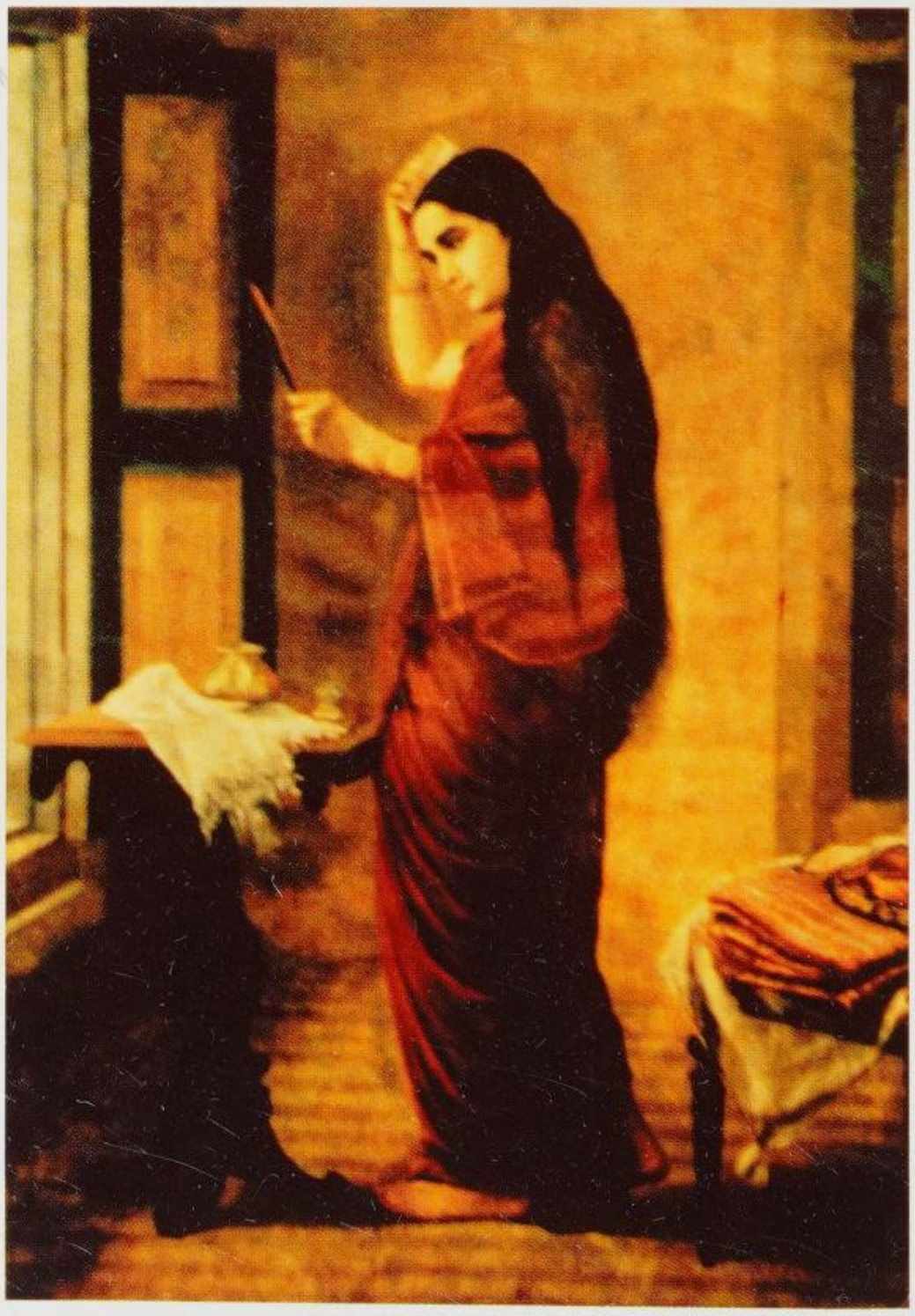
Plate 14:

A. The artist in his studio with camera. Pencil sketch, n.d. (*c.* 1895).

B. Lady in European dress. Photograph (*c.* 1894).

C. Model posing before an open window.
This photograph was a preliminary for the painting *Lady with a Mirror*. Interior and table in the photograph are the same as in the painting. Photograph (*c.* 1894).

D. *Lady with a Mirror.*
Oil painting by Ravi Varma, 1894.



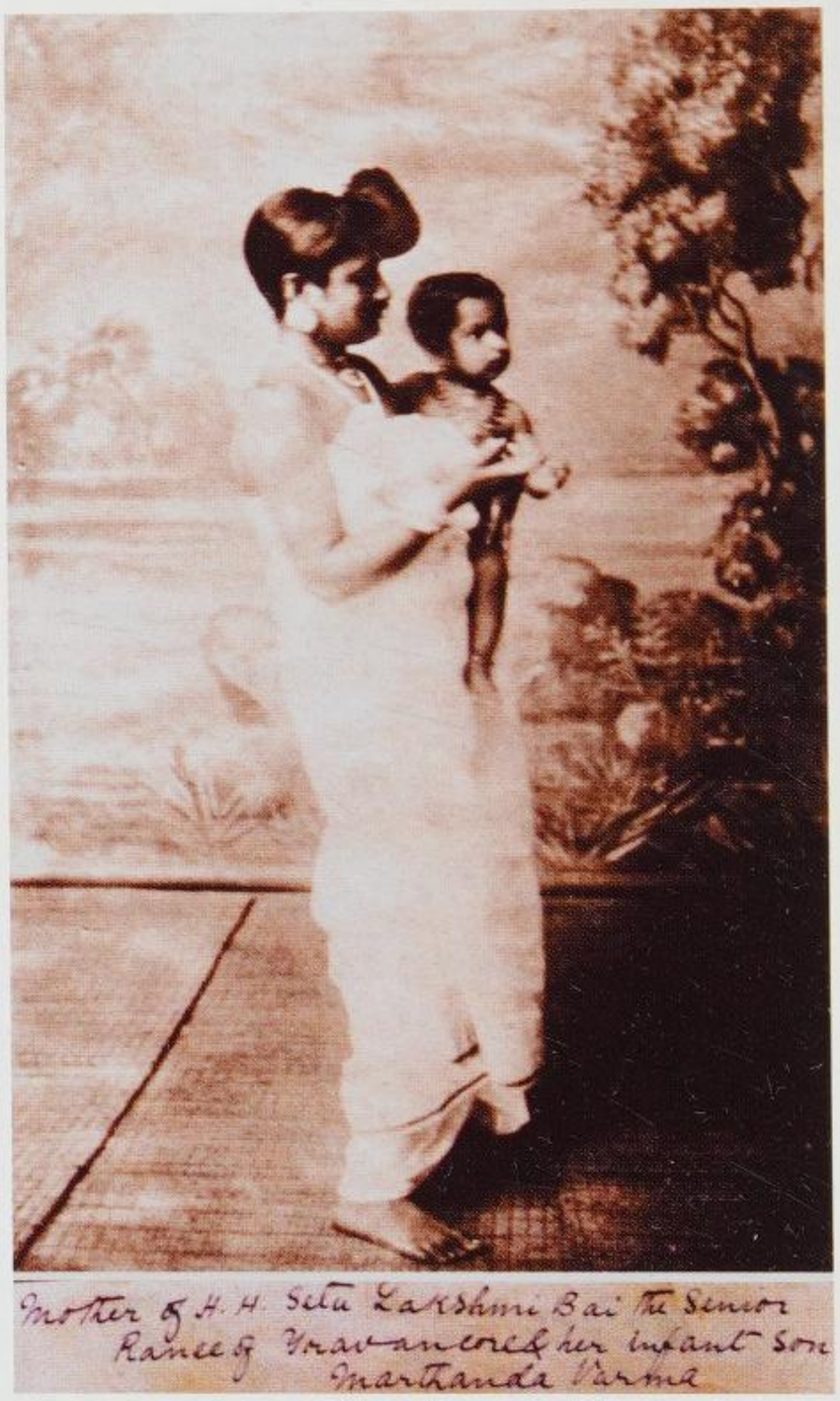
A B
C

Plate 15:

A. Woman modelling for the painting *In one sense we are equal* by C. Raja Raja Varma. Here, model and painting show how close the Varma brothers kept to the photographic image, even in rather complex settings. Interesting how a cast iron fence becomes a masonry parapet and a chair obviously metamorphoses into a dog. It is the make-believe environment of the photographic atelier of the time.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1904).

B. 'In one sense we are equal'.
Photograph for the oil painting by C. Raja Raja Varma, 1904.

C. Photograph of a woman modelling with a pet bird, possibly a preparatory study for the painting *In one sense we are equal*, n.d. (*c.* 1904).



A B

C

Plate 16:

A. *There comes Papa.*
Oil painting by Ravi Varma, 1893.

B, C. Photographic studies for the painting *There comes Papa.*
Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1893).

A. *'There comes Papa*—By Ravi Varma Travancore, South-India'. Ravi Varma kept closely to the photographic study, except for the dog. An animal considered unclean by local standards. Even so, Ravi Varma did take in a pet dog in at least one more portrait, the one he painted of the Baroda Princess, Tara Bai.

Plate 17:

For the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, Ravi Varma prepared 10 paintings of women as allegories of Indian life. The more famous of the lot is the painting *There comes Papa* for which he took his elder daughter Mahaprabha (b. 1871) and her baby son Martanda Varma as model. Photographs of different poses as preliminary studies exist.

One of the photographs still bears the rather confusing legend 'Mother of H.H. Sethu Lakshmibai the Senior Rani of Travancore and her infant son Marthanda Varma', which states nothing more than the status of Ravi Varma's daughter as mother of the adopted Rani of Attingale, her oldest daughter, who eventually became the Senior Rani of Travancore. Indeed, she even acted as Regent of Travancore from 1923 till 1932, during the minority of the crown prince, her younger sister's son.

The 10 paintings at the World exposition were accompanied by a booklet in which the artist explains the painting as follows:
There comes the father. A Keralite mother clad in white cloth is preparing to go to the temple with her son at her arm. A dog is following. She can start as soon as her husband comes. Looking at the child (she speaks): 'There comes the father.'

A B
C D

Plate 18:

A, B. Rajibai posing for the portrait *Lady with a Fan* by Frank Brooks. The photograph shows a heavy curtain as backdrop. In Brooks' oil painting, the background is transformed to tropical foliage.
Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1894).

C. 'Rajibai our Model in Bombay'.
Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1894).

D. Rajibai and another unknown model (possibly her friend Lakshmibai).
Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1894).

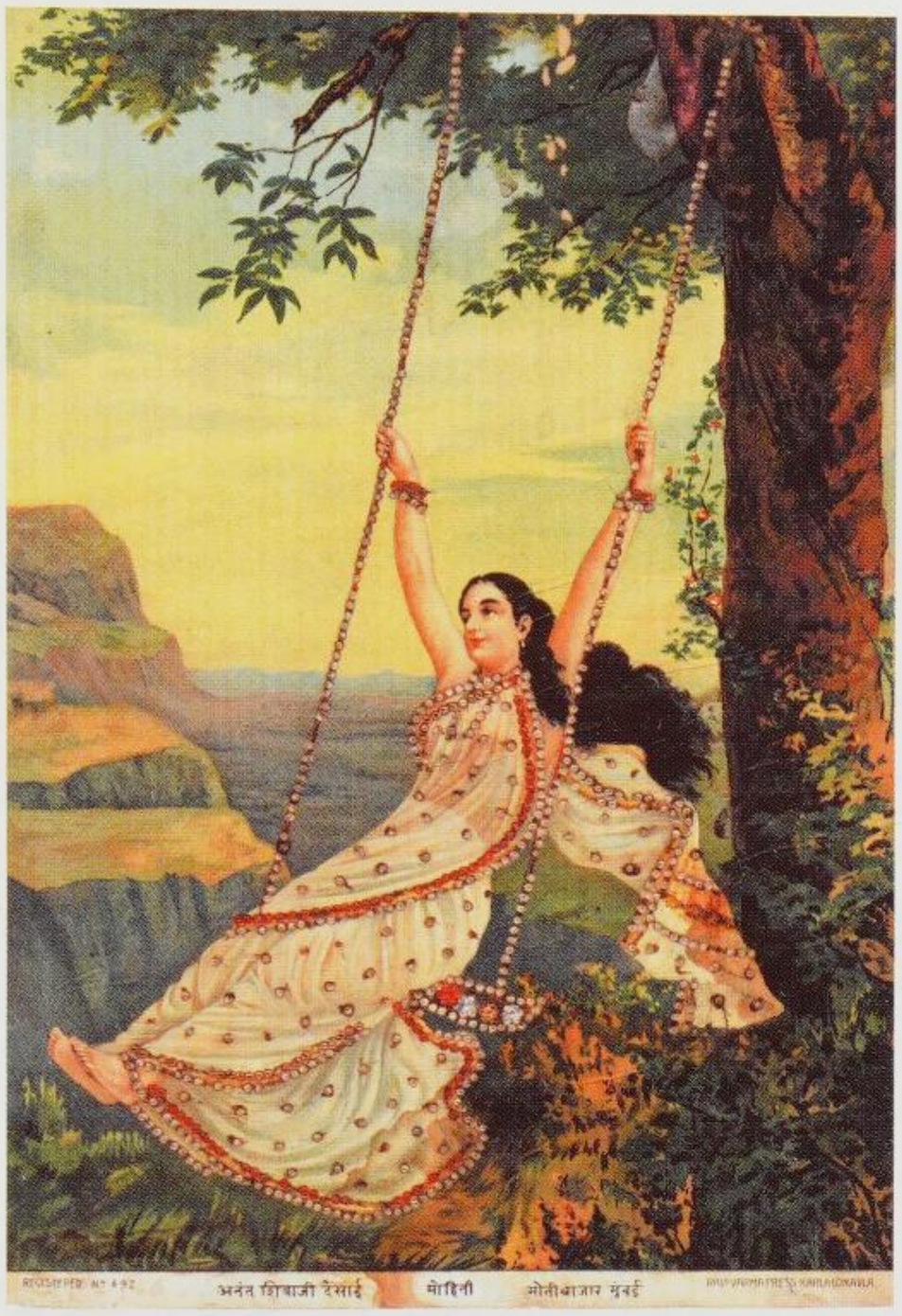


Plate 19:

A. 'Mohini' (Lady on a swing). Oleograph, embossed with silver sheet and beads; printed *c.* 1905.

B, C, D, E. Anjanibai posing for the painting *Mohini*.
Photograph, n.d. (*c.* 1903).

Ravi Varma worked mainly from photographs. Models—particularly women models—were hard to come by (Diary 15 February 1902), and modelling in the nude was out of the question.

The only known model from Bombay is Rajibai, the daughter of a friend of the Varma brothers. Rajibai also stood model for the British painter Frank Brooks, for his painting *Lady with a Fan* (1894?), which seemed to have been commissioned by Ravi Varma. Some of the photographs taken during the modelling session survived (Pl. 18), (Diary 23–28 June 1898).

Much speculated about in Ravi Varma's biographies is Anjanibai Malpekar, a dancer, singer and courtesan, who was the muse of Ravi Varma's later years. Several surviving photographs show her posing in the artist's studio. In one such photograph is seen the painting *Mohini*, a lady on a swing, for which Anjanibai Malpekar is obviously modelling. This picture was also to become a popular oleograph (Pl. 19 A). In the background of that photograph is seen the painting of a woman at a water tap.

A B
D C

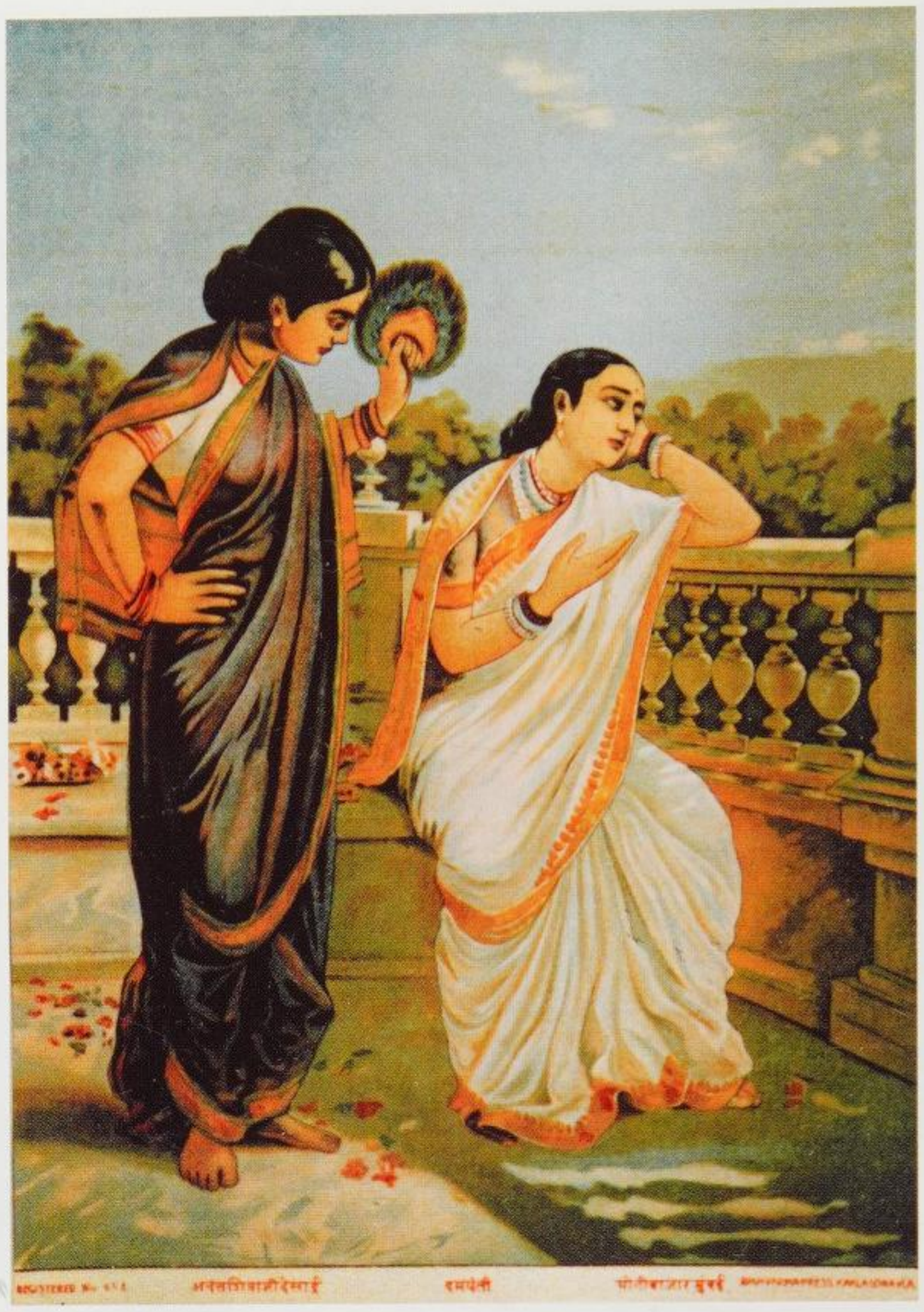
Plate 20:

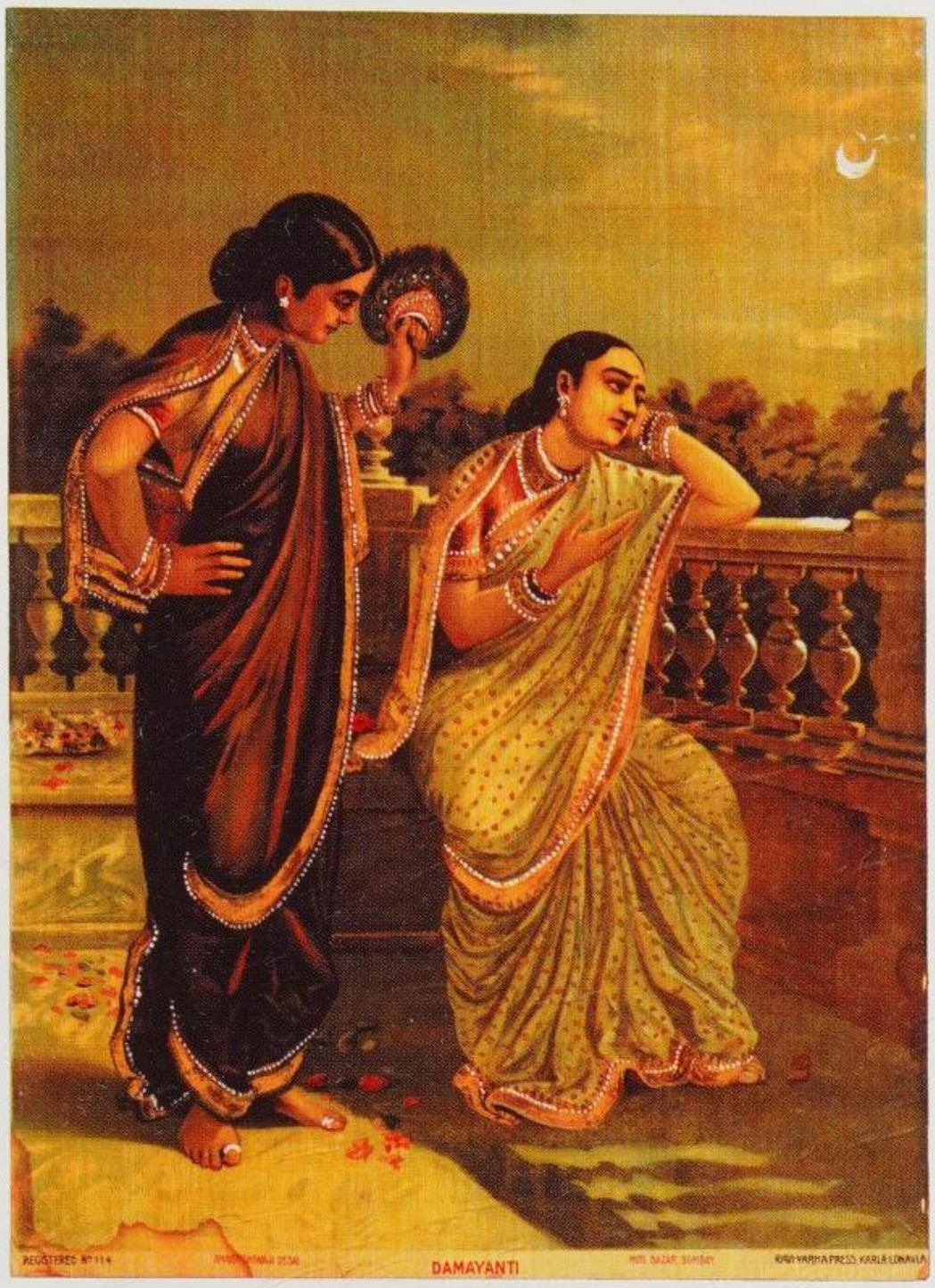
A. 'The Feast of Roses, L'inamorata'. Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1900).

B. Damayanti, the epic heroine is clearly styled after the stage photographs of 'The Feast of Roses' as can be understood from architectural details. The classical robe of the actress is transformed into an Indian saree. Oleograph n.d. (*c.* 1900)

C. Damayanti. Original lithographic stone for the colour 'Pink', Ravi Varma Press, Malavli, n.d. (*c.* 1894).

D. Two portrait photographs from an album of eight, showing head studies by English actresses. The photographs were framed into a folding wallet made of red velvet and covered with glass. The photographs are from different studios in London. Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1900).





A

B

Plate 21:

A. 'Damayanti'. Oleograph n.d. (*c.* 1900). The print was obviously glossed over with too dark a varnish. The scenery therefore was changed to a night scene. The bangles and jewels of the ladies are redrawn by hand and decorated with sheet gold and pearls. The status of the prints before 1900 allowed such expensive manipulations, which increased the already high prices further.

B. 'The Feast of Roses—The messenger'. Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1900).

Several of Ravi Varma's epical compositions can be shown as adaptations of theatre productions, of which he had a good number of still photographs in his collection. He also used other illustrated material, mainly scenes from European paintings, whose dramatic expressions he altered to fit his Indian themes into an Indian setting.

The oleograph 'Damayanti' is a good study in case, where the work of Ravi Varma can be shown from the photographic model to the published picture.

A

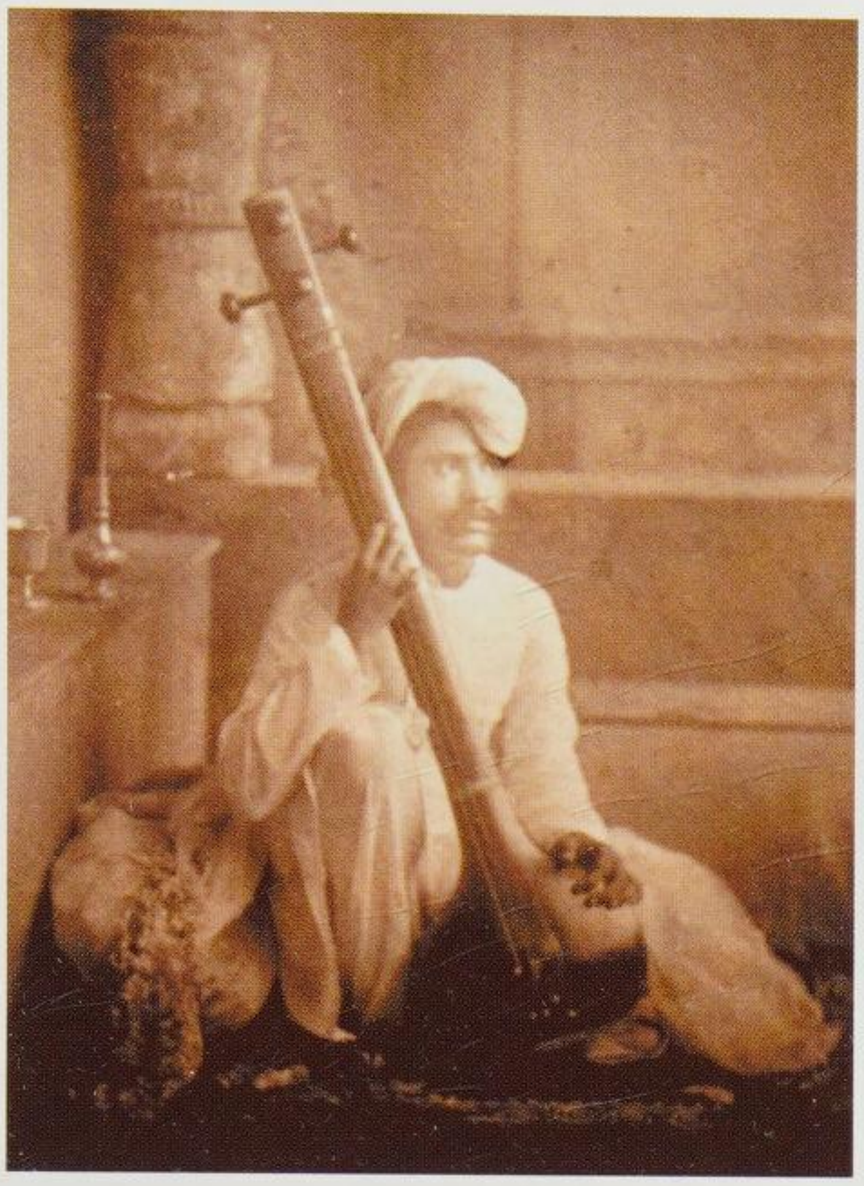
B

Plate 22:

The Varma brothers were enthusiastic patrons of the Bombay Theatres, at times visiting several shows on a single evening. A number of these theatres were places of evil repute.

Ravi Varma obviously prepared pencil sketches while watching the show. This at least is what some of the pencil drawings found in some of the sketch-books suggest.

A, B. Pencil sketches probably drawn during theatre performances.



A B
D C

Plate 23:

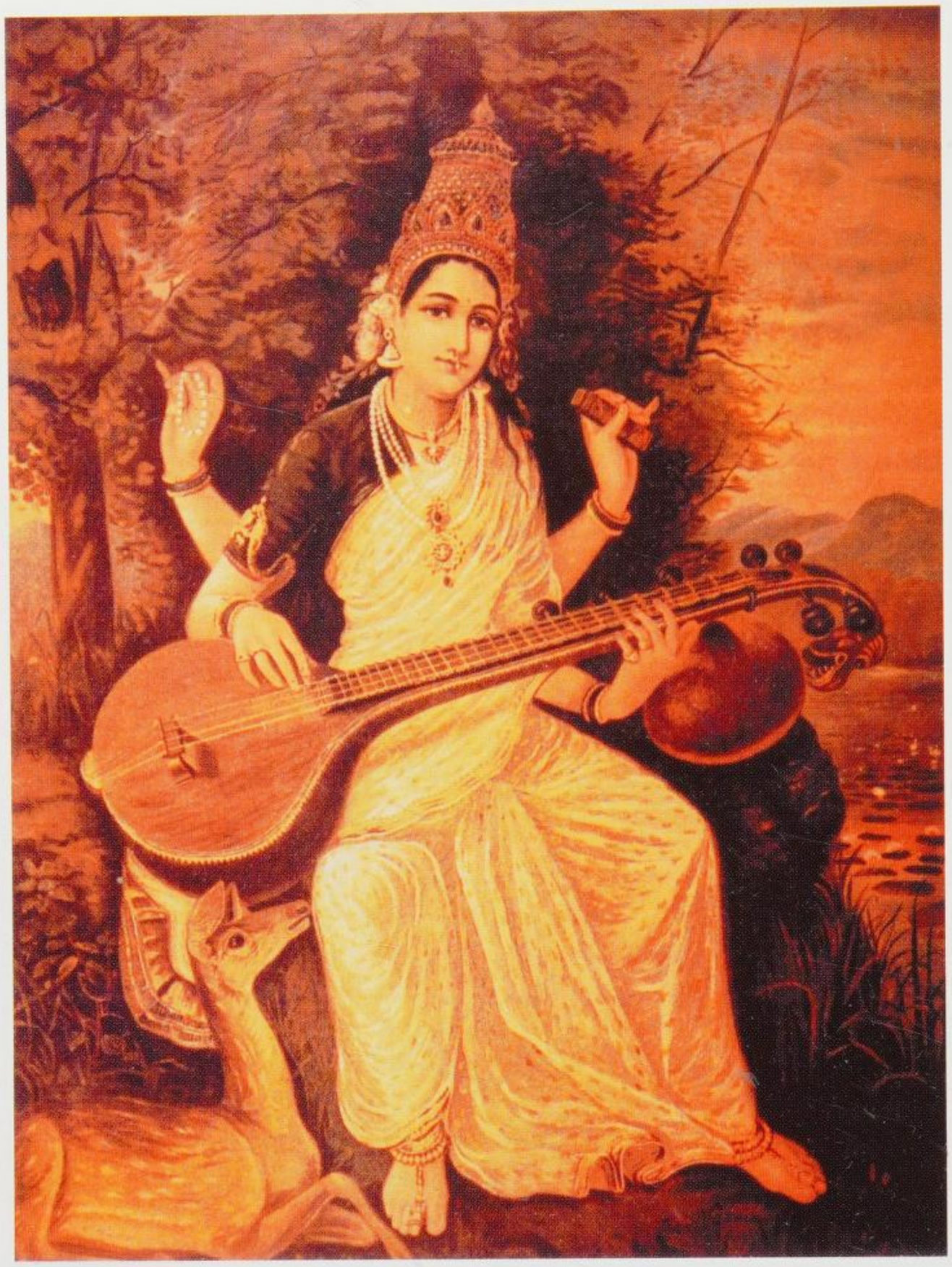
A. 'Man with Tambura'.
Photograph n.d.

B. *Man with Sitar.*
Watercolour sketch, n.d.

C. *Girl with a Sitar.*
Pencil sketch n.d.

D. *Street Musician.*
Watercolour sketch, n.d.

Musicians are one of the most recurring themes in Ravi Varma's paintings. In the communication between the Mysore Palace and the artist, several musicians are mentioned, who had to be in-waiting on the artist for his personal entertainment. Several of the sketches and photographs depict these maestros.



A B
C
D

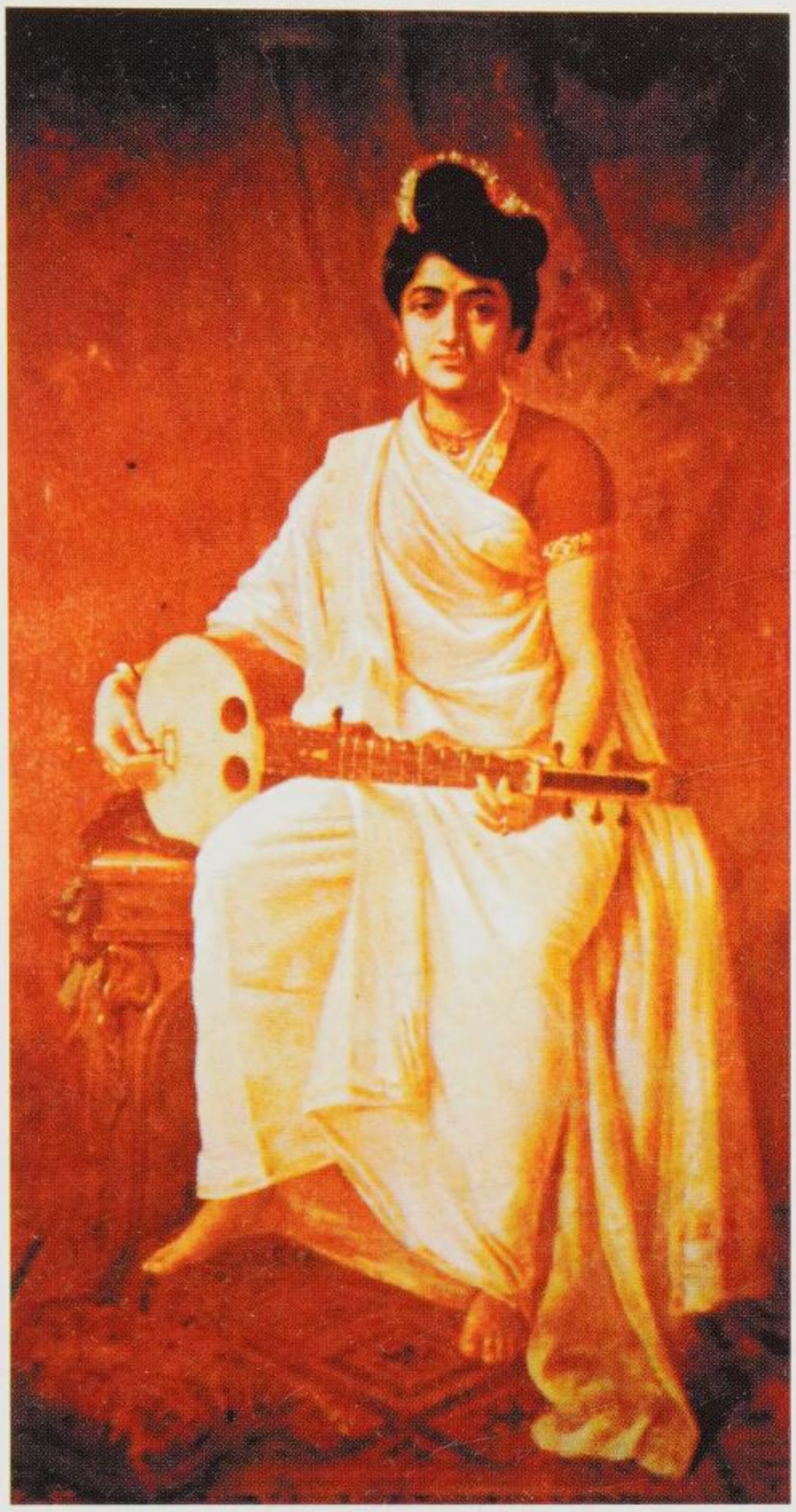
Plate 24:

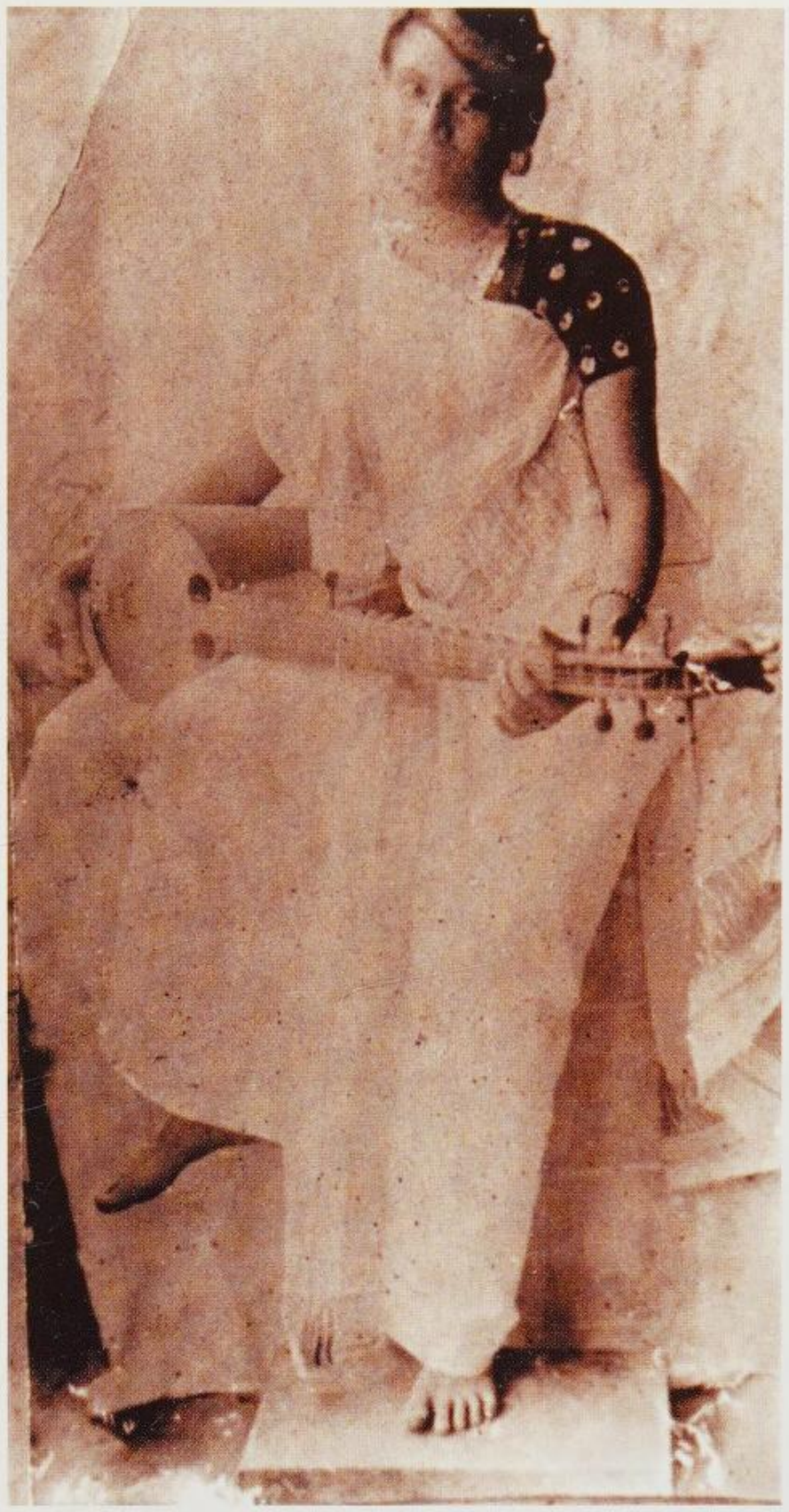
A. 'Saraswati', Oleograph from a painting by Ravi Varma, printed *c.* 1894. Although the traditional *vahana* of Saraswati is Hams—the Goose or Swan—here it is a deer. Ravi Varma painted many versions of the goddess.

B. 'Lady with a Violin'. The European violin has been long used in classical Karnatic Music. Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1880).

C. Photographic study for the painting *Malabar Beauty* (*see* Pl. 25A). Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1899).

D. Woman playing the veena.
This photograph was later transferred into an oil painting by Ravi Varma. Today it is housed in the Trivandrum Art Gallery although not signed or dated. Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1900).





A B

C

Plate 25:

A. *Malabar Beauty*. Oil painting by Ravi Varma, 1899.

B. Photographic study for the painting *Malabar Beauty*.

C. *Galaxy of Musicians*. Painting by Ravi Varma, 1889.
Ravi Varma painted several pictures of women playing on traditional instruments. These individual figures appeared again and again, grouped and regrouped in many of his paintings. The most programmatic of these paintings is *Galaxy of Musicians*, a group of women musicians playing on different musical instruments, allegorically representing Indian unity in diversity.

A B
C D E

Plate 26:

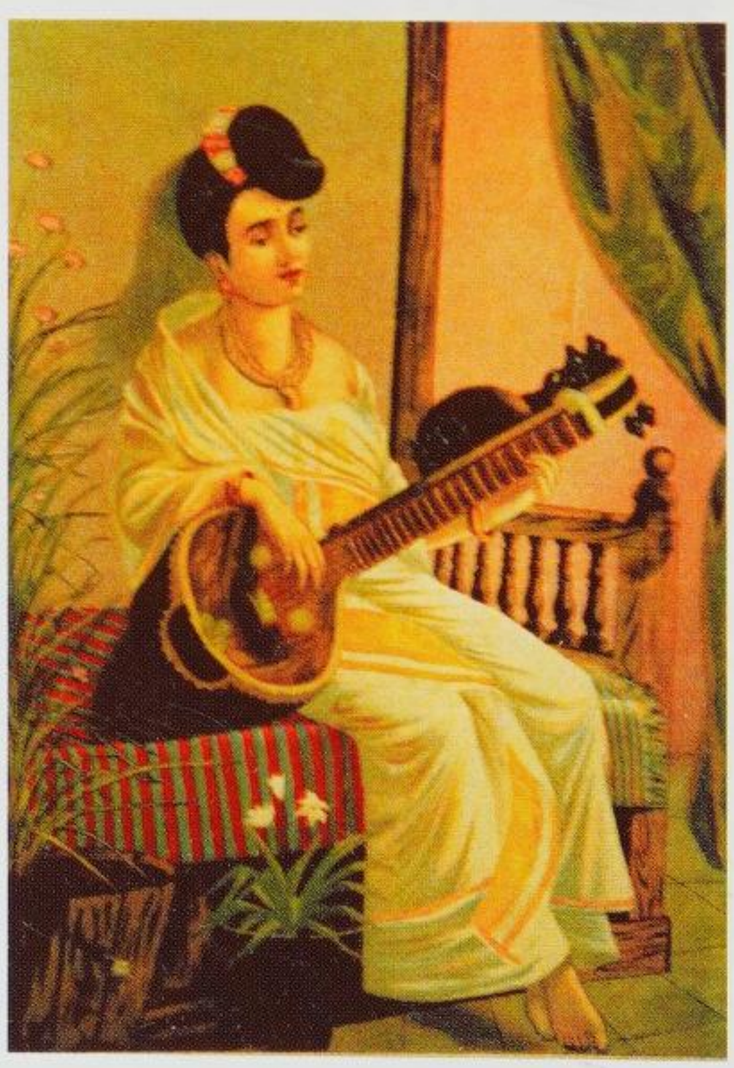
A. Studio photograph of a sleeping model posing with veena in arm. The model is obviously a dressed-up male. The study might have been used for one version of *Sleeping Beauty*. A similar painting by Ravi Varma captured the attention of the Prince of Wales during his visit to Travancore in 1875.
Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1894).

B. *Sleeping Beauty* (Urvashi).
One of the many versions of a lady with a veena. Oil painting by Ravi Varma, n.d. (1880?), Baroda.

C. 'Malabar Beauty'.
Photograph of the original painting by Ravi Varma, n.d. (*c.* 1880).

D. Oleograph based on the same painting, printed (*c.* 1900).

E. Oleograph based on the painting *Malabar Beauty* by Ravi Varma, printed *c.* 1920.
(Mark the transformation of the spittoon and *kindi*—the ceremonial water-pot—into flower-pots.)



A
B C
D E

Plate 27:

A. 'Woman with a tambura'.
Photograph n.d.

B. *Poverty*. Oil painting by Ravi Varma, d. 1893.
Poverty or *The Bombay Singers* was one of the 10 paintings sent to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago 1893. Photographic poses and sketches for the painting survived in Ravi Varma's Library and sketchbooks.

C. *Squatting Girl*.
Tinted pencil sketch n.d. (*c.* 1893).

D, E. Two photographs of a woman with a child on her lap.
Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1893).

A

B

Plate 28:

A. *Man Reading.* In the diary, C. Raja Raja Varma describes how an acquaintance had brought one of the new kerosene lamps from Germany, which 'give a bright and steady light...' (Diary 14 June 1898). Both the Varma brothers made several sketches of each other reading in the light of such a novel kerosene lamp. Tinted pencil sketch n.d. (*c.* 1898).

B. *A Student.* Portrait of the spectacled C. Raja Raja Varma reading in the glow of a German lamp. Oil painting by Ravi Varma, n.d. (*c.* 1900).

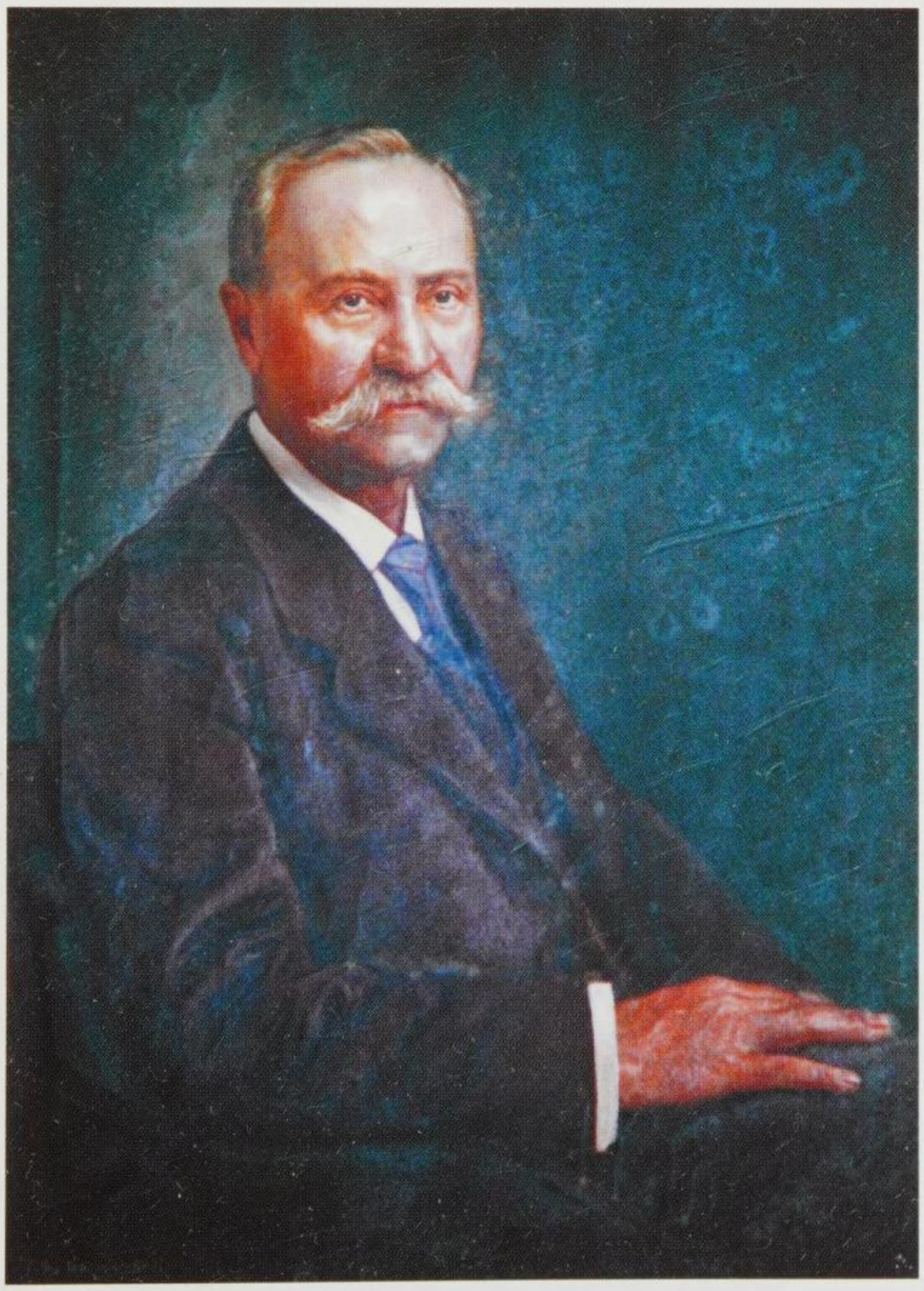
A

B

Plate 29:

A. Fritz Schleicher with bag and beaters (*c.* 1932).

B. *Fritz Schleicher*,
Oil painting by Y.M. Kandnikar (*c.* 1932).

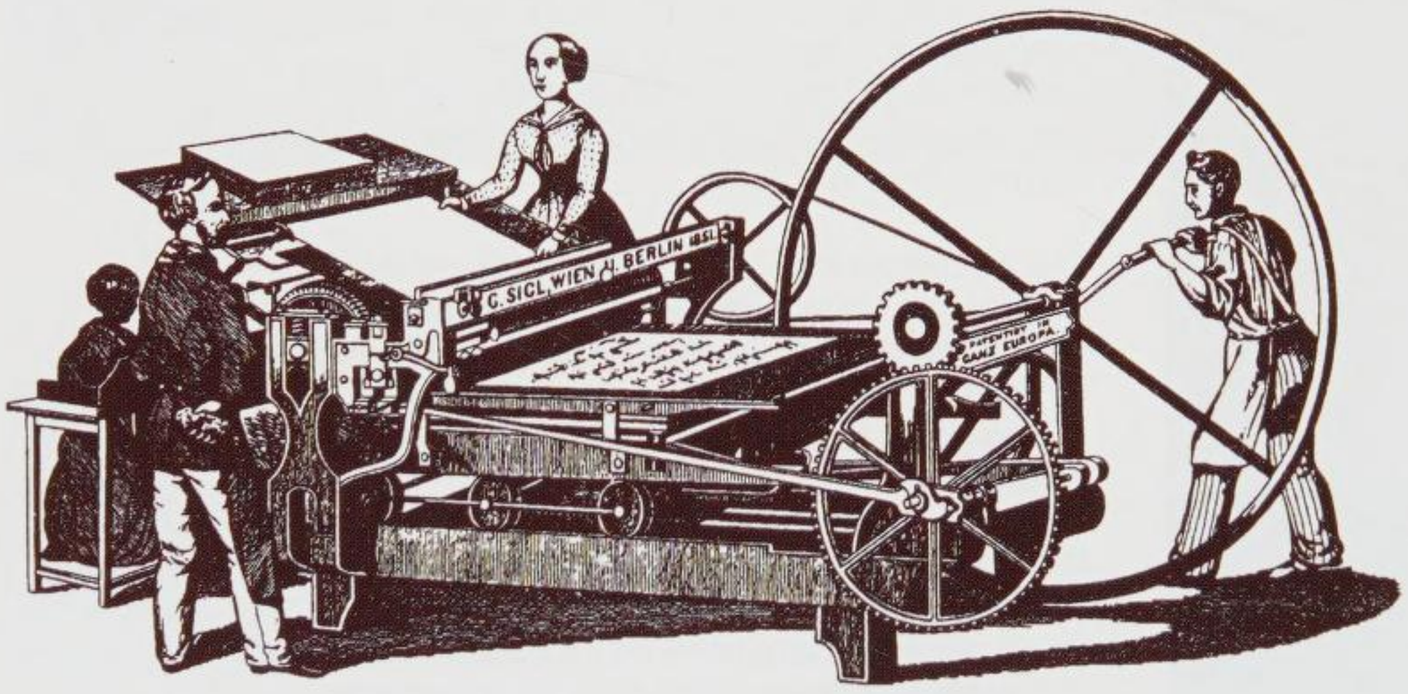


One of the most important and pioneering enterprises of Ravi Varma was the founding of the Ravi Varma Lithographic Press, which was instrumental in broadcasting his mythical pictures as the first visual pan-Indian medium. The machinery and experts for the Press were imported from Germany.

The pivotal position of the Press was held by the German master printer Fritz Schleicher, who became its sole owner after 1903. From then on he led it to financial success, and established display prints in India as the most popular visual medium.

Not much is known of the earlier years of Fritz Schleicher, who was born in 1862, probably in Berlin. He must have been an exceptional printer and extremely enterprising once he owned the Ravi Varma Press. He became the local big man of the region, establishing himself almost in a feudal manner in Malavli, recruiting labour in the village of Bhaji for his printing enterprise as well as serving as beaters for his hunting forays.

After Schleicher's death in 1935 the Press ran into trouble again. Dynastic quarrels and mismanagement almost brought it down, but it recovered shortly after its takeover by Schleicher´s daughter and her husband, Dr Sahu. The Ravi Varma Press always employed a number of German technicians and printers, and was one of the most innovative printing establishments of India, till it burned down accidentally in 1972 and could not recover thereafter.



A

B

Plate 30:

A. The main preparatory stages of the lithographic process:
Left: Polishing the stone.
Middle: Transferring the image to the stone by oil-pastel or oily inks.
Right: Printing ink is rolled onto the stone, the stone is corrected in a lithographic hand press. During this process, the drawing on the stone is corrected and made permanent. The stone is then transferred to the cylinder press, seen in the background, where tinting of the stone and feeding of paper are mechanized.

B. Advertisement for a cylinder printing press of the firm Georg Sigl of Vienna 1852, which had been pioneering mechanized printing machinery since the middle of the nineteenth century. There, presses were steam powered, easy to handle, as the advertisement indicates, by the employed women and children—cheap labour in the nineteenth century—while specialized labour—the printer—is seen standing rather idle to supervise. The child-driven hand wheel indicates easy traction, but in everyday practice, such machines were steam powered. Ravi Varma imported two such machines.

The lithographic process demanded highly trained and accomplished artists in the preparation of the stone and the transfer of the image on to the stone. Colour separation was still done by hand, which meant that each colour had to be separated and transferred on to an individual stone. In successive print runs, the impressions from the different stones were imprinted on to a single sheet, till the complete colour image appeared.

Once the stones were prepared and set up in the machine, the printing was done by casual labourers, under the supervision of a printer. The printing operation in Ravi Varma's Press was basically the same as the one shown in the picture above. Print runs of 5000 prints per shift of eight hours were possible. The Ravi Varma Press originally had two steam-driven litho-presses.

A B

C D

Plate 31:

A. 'Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth'. Oleograph, Ravi Varma Press, printed *c.* 1900.

B. Detail from the masterstone for *Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth.* The dark contour lines demarcate the different colours. The large prints were printed in fourteen different colours, the smaller prints in seven colours.

C. Original colourstone 'Blue' for the print 'Kadambari'.

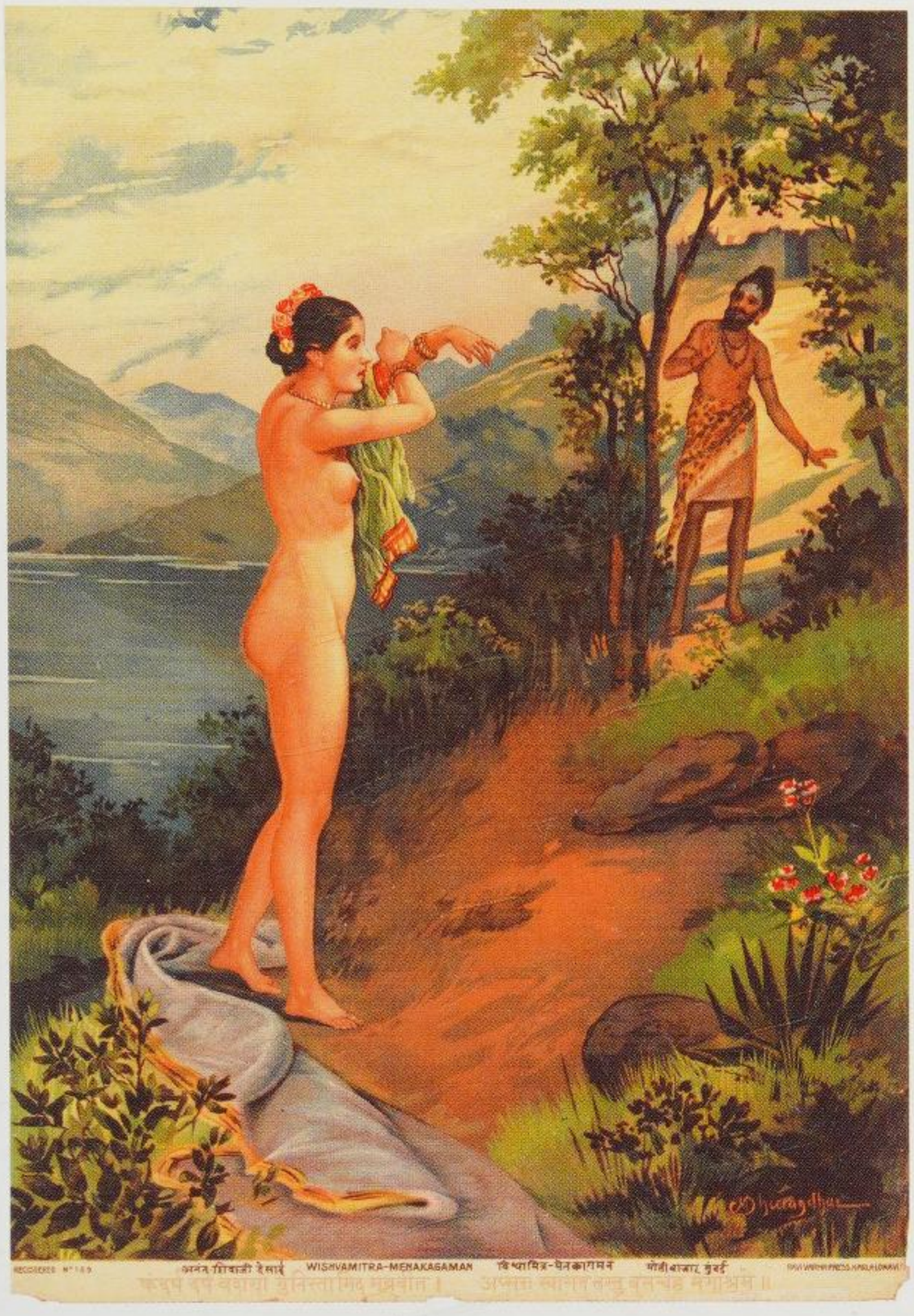
D. Oleographic print 'Kadambari', Ravi Varma Press, 1898.

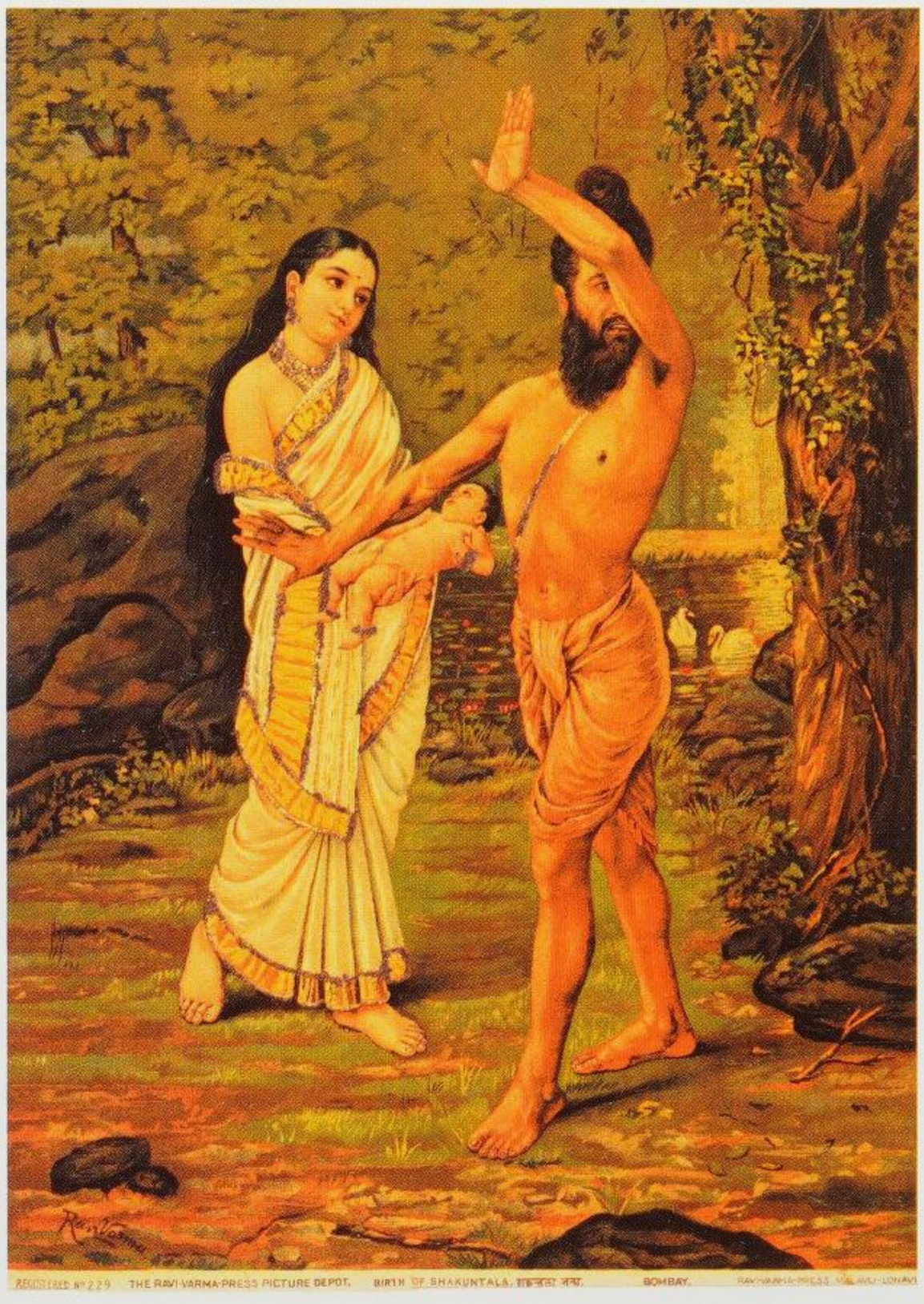
Plate 32:

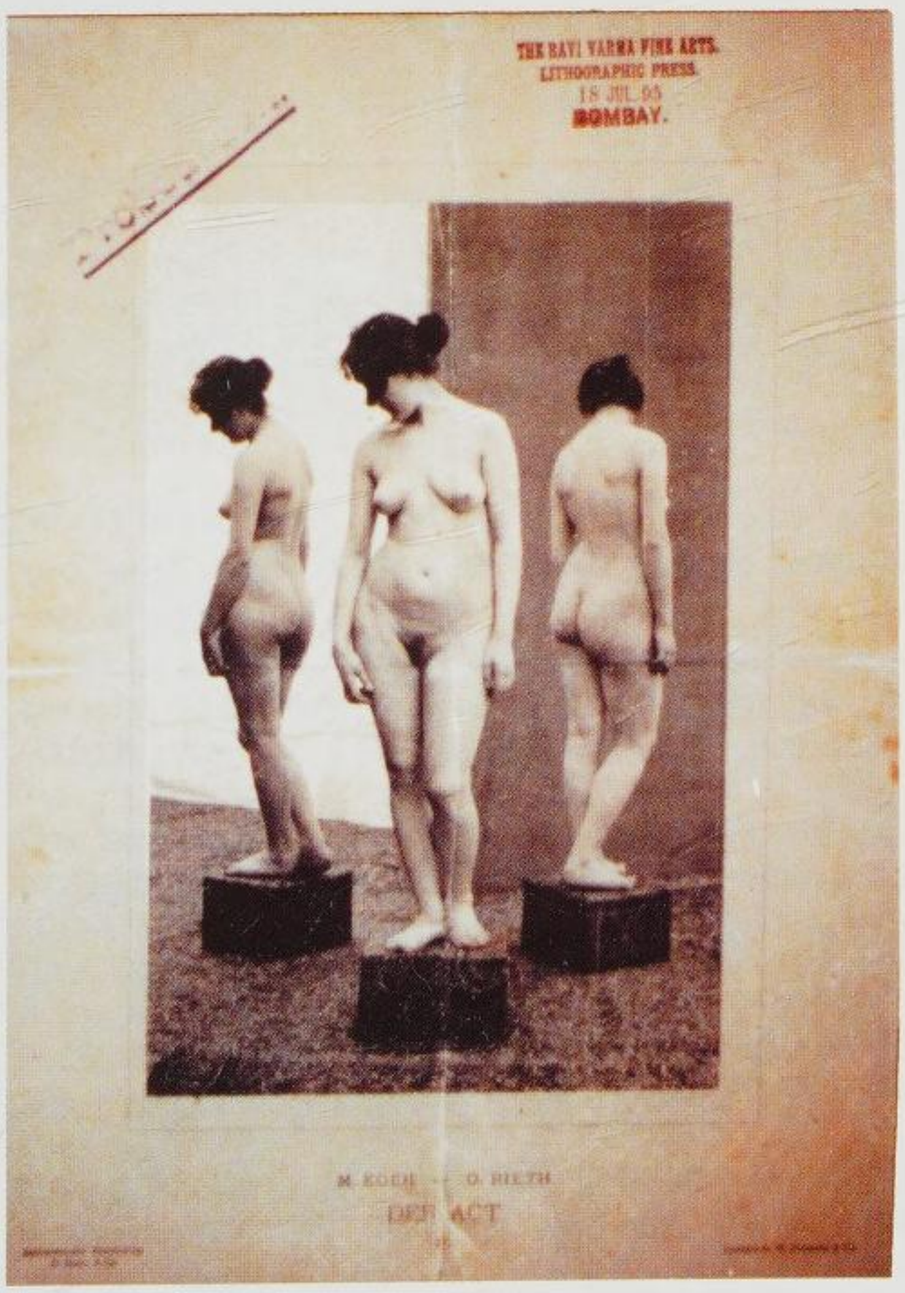
A. 'Nude Ladies with silken umbrella'. Oleograph, printed in Germany (*c.* 1894).

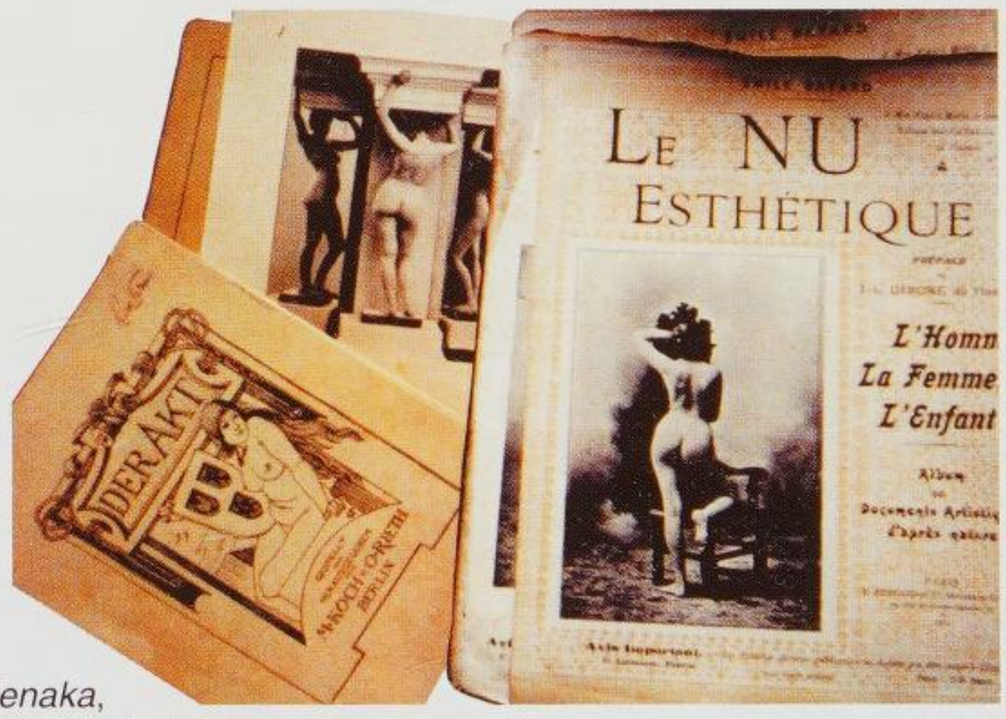
Through his career, Ravi Varma never had the opportunity to practise painting from models in the nude. Although he was quite competent in painting draped figures, when it came to the depiction of the human physique, the shortcomings clearly showed. Ravi Varma and his brother used French and German model books, depicting 'classical poses' of men, women, and children. These magazines were advertised in Germany as *Aktstudien* (studies in the nude) for the artist, but were generally bought as easily-available erotic magazines during these times. That Ravi Varma did indeed use these 'model books' is clear from one page from Koch's book, which is rubber-stamped with Ravi Varma's press seal, reading 'PROBEDRUCK' (Trial Print), the other 'The Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press 18. Jul. 95 Bombay'. This print is taken from *Der Akt* (The Nude). A number of figures in Ravi Varma's paintings correspond to 'classical poses' as found in these 'model books'. A typical example is the *Birth of Shakuntala*, in which Vishvamitra poses in a dramatized fashion, rather like an over-acting dance master.

Depictions of nudes easily provoked the censor, or one of the many groups professing to fight against social evils. 'Obscenity' was always high on their agenda. One case against nude pictures was closely followed by the Varma brothers during their stay in Bombay in 1894 (*see also* Diary Note 7). The case centred around the sale of 'German prints' featuring nude ladies on a forest glade (Pl. 32A). The judgement case in the Bombay High Court held that 'naked pictures of classical subjects were not obscene, in that, the artist had higher ideals than those of merely exciting the sensual appetites of the spectators. The pictures in question might have been classed among them, had it not been for the introduction into them of modern silk umbrellas and apparel which divested them of their idealism'. Ravi Varma and his brother C. Raja Raja Varma sat during the hearing in the courtroom. They themselves were experts on how to avoid the indictment of the court, since the Ravi Varma Press was soon to print pictures in the millions which were at least as naked as the ones from Germany, but definitely better immunized with religious and social varnish against censorial appetite.









A B
C D

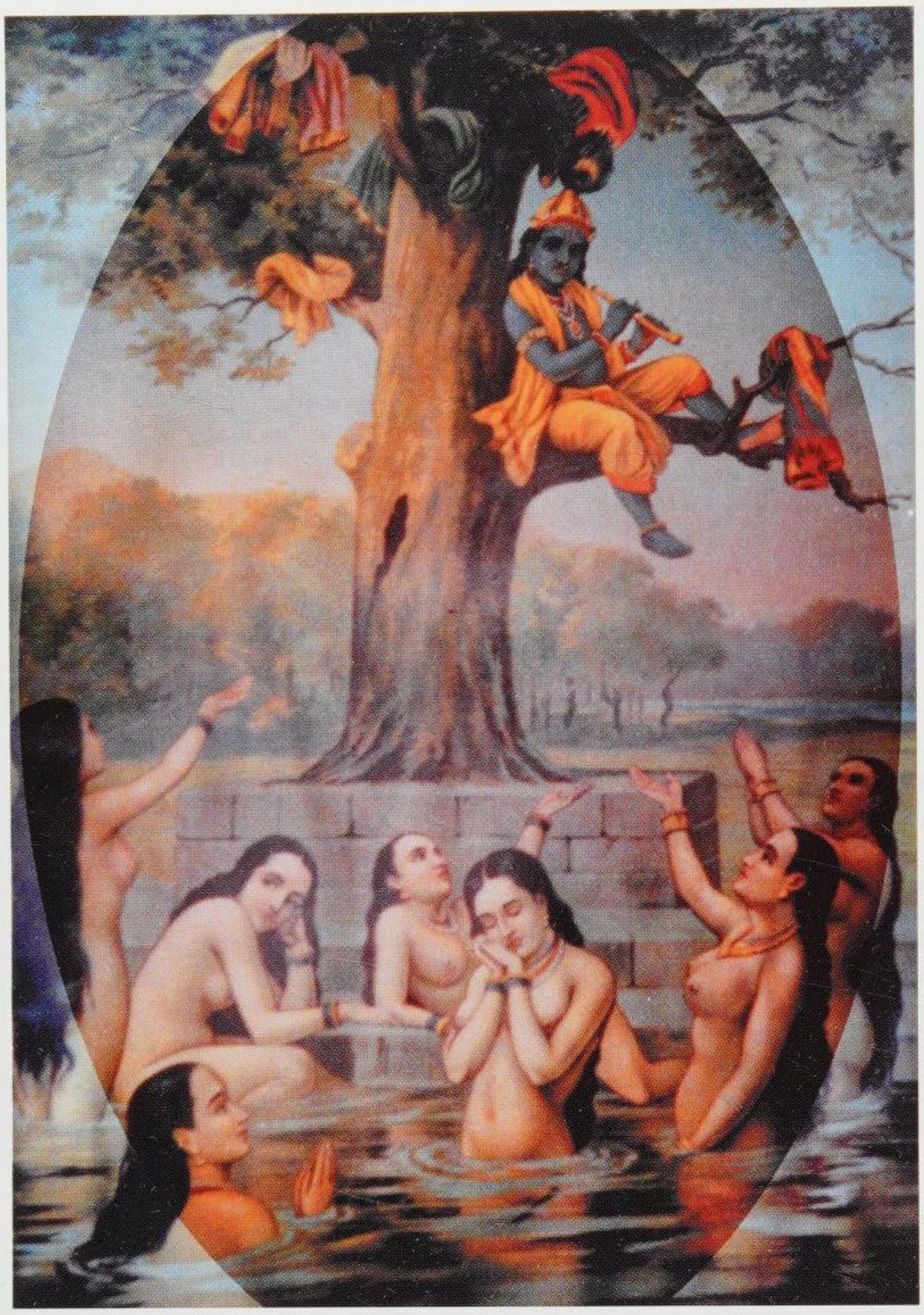
Plate 33:

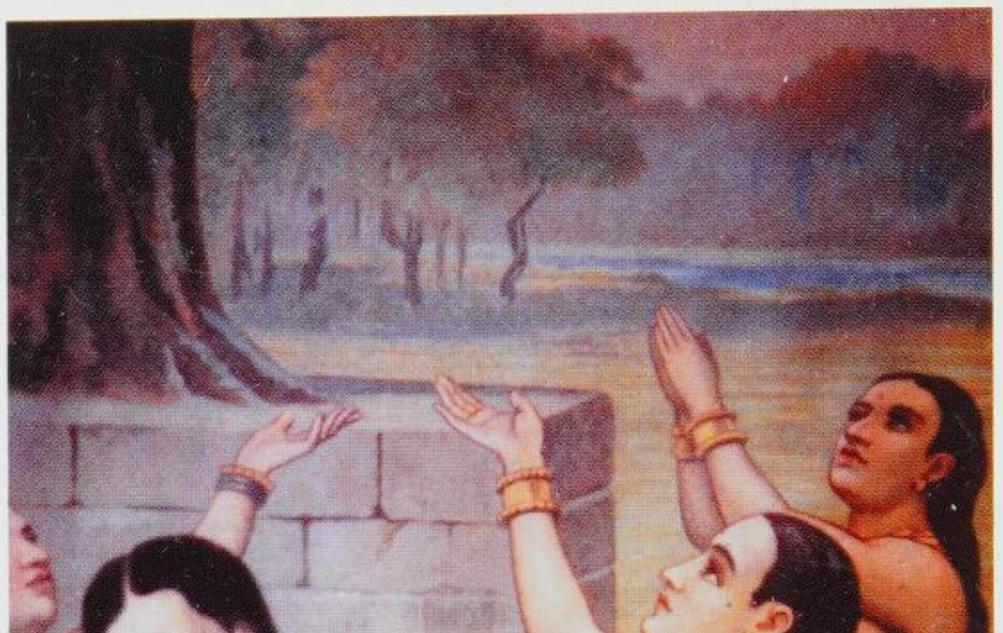
A. *Vishvamitra and Menaka*, painted by Dhurandhar, printed at the Ravi Varma Press, *c.* 1905.

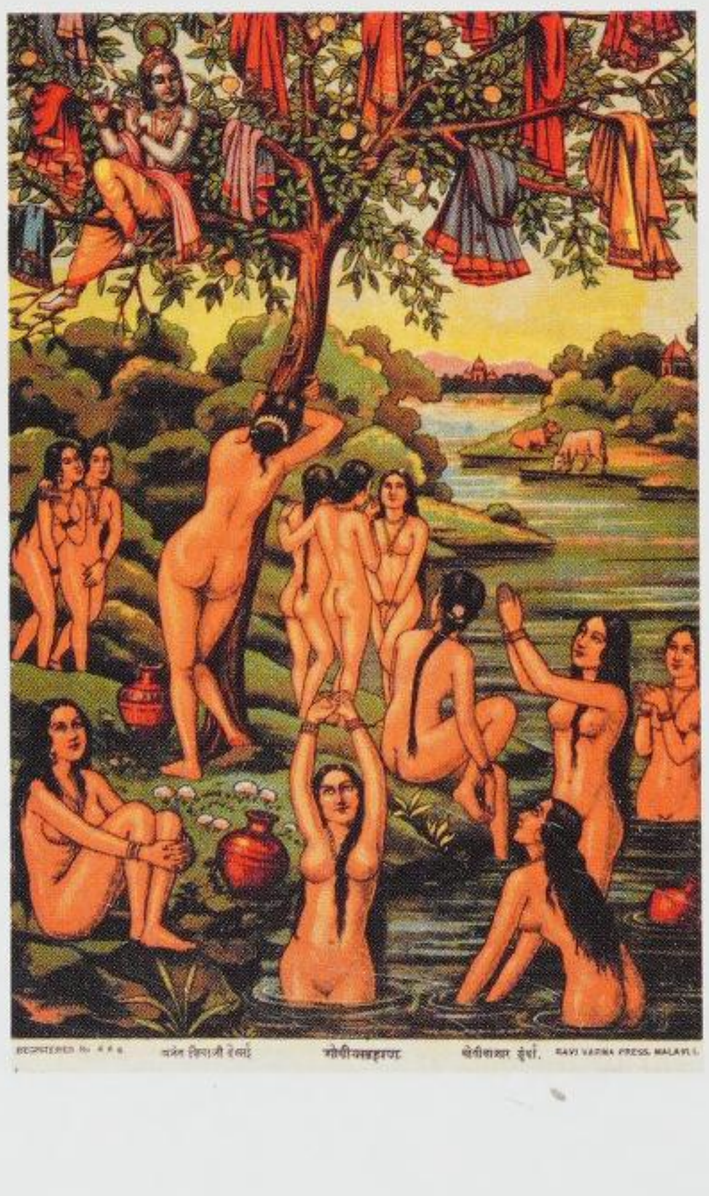
B. 'Birth of Shakuntala' (Vishvamitra and Maneka), printed at the Ravi Varma Press, *c.* 1900.

C. Page from *Der Akt*, published by Dr Koch and O. Rieth, this page is stamped 'PROBEDRUCK' (Trial print) and 'The Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press 18. Jul. 95 Bombay'.

D. Assorted magazines featuring nudes from the library of Ravi Varma:
Der Akt, published by Dr Koch and O. Rieth, n.d. (*c.* 1890).
Le Nu Esthétique, n.d. (*c.* 1890).







Very soon after the High Court hearing in Bombay, 1894, the Ravi Varma Press produced pictures which showed as much and more of what was forbidden for German prints. Doing this under the garb of religious tradition was a clever, and often-practised strategy of immunization against censure.

The all-time best was the rendering into pictures of the erotic dalliances of the god Krishna and the Gopis.

A B

C

Plate 34:

A, B. 'Krishna stealing the clothes of the bathing Gopis'. Oleograph from the Ravi Varma Press (*c.* 1900).

C. 'Krishna stealing the clothes of the bathing Gopis'. Oleograph from the Ravi Varma Press (*c.* 1910).

A
B

Plate 35:

A, B. 'Krishna stealing the clothes of the bathing Gopis'.
Four-colour offset print (*c.* 1970).

'The stealing of the clothes' is a theme which demanded the depiction of uncovered women's bodies. Indeed, so popular became this print that it was reprinted time after time, with only slight modifications. The pin-up character of the print was hardly objected to, and although there were attempts at censure, the print is still one of the most popular of the genre.

One rather obscure attempt at censorship was a CID inquiry about the print, instigated by the Army Head Command of Assam in 1943. The then manager of the Ravi Varma Press informed them that the print was in circulation since Ravi Varma's times, and that he was of the opinion that it indicated nothing but accepted religious beliefs and therefore could not be taken out of circulation. Here ended the story as the former director of the Press remembered it some fifty years later.

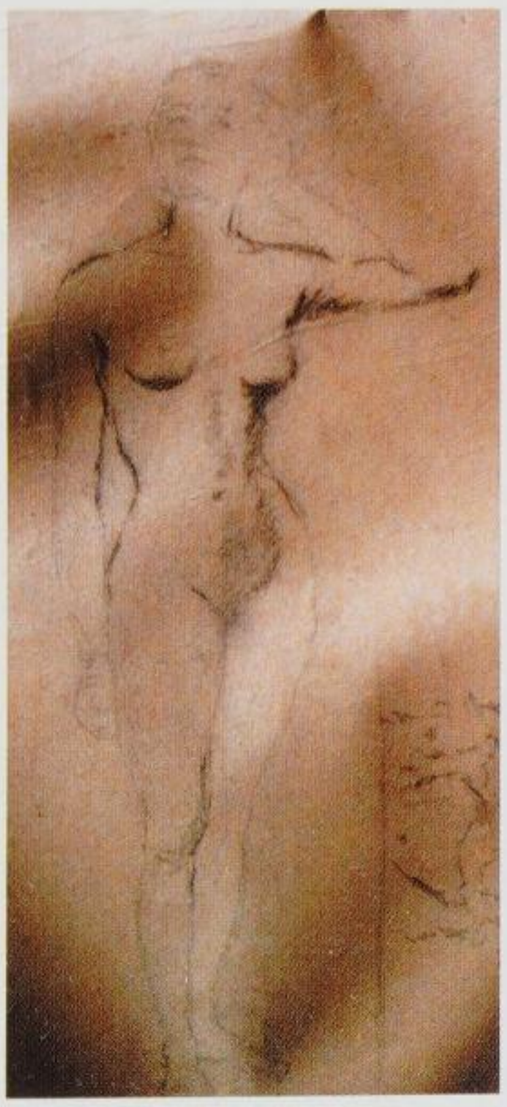
Indeed fifty years later, it seemed to be opportune to dress the bathing gopis with diaphanous clothes while bathing. Eroticism in Indian art has its strange ways.

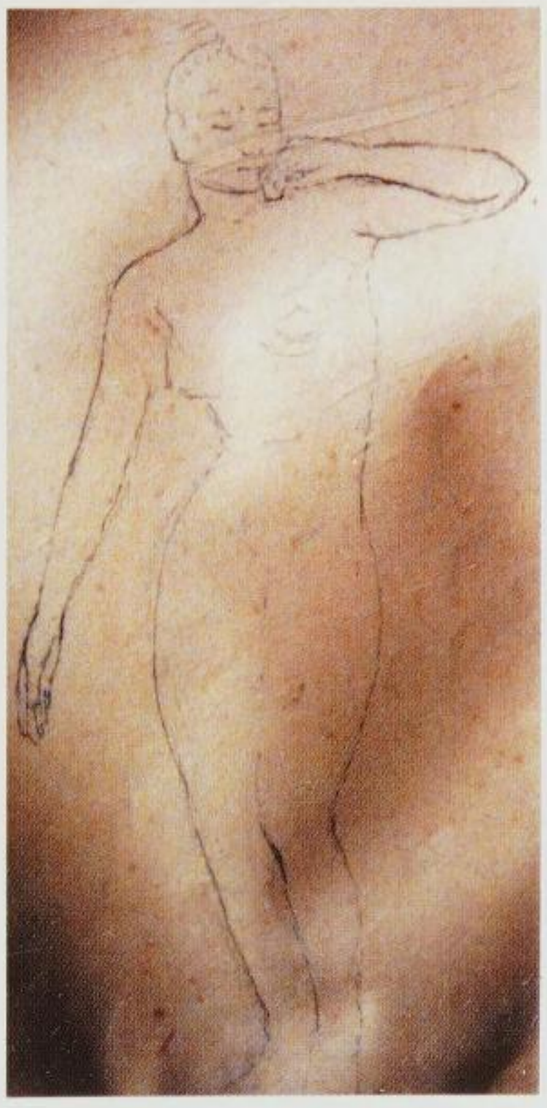
Plate 36:

A. Three German prints of bathing beauties, n.d. (*c.* 1900).

'Cheap German Prints' were the main obstacle for the unlimited business opportunities of the Ravi Varma Press. Although these prints had mostly profane themes, very soon Indian mythological themes were plagiarized as well. In 1903, Fritz Schleicher did print 'cheap' pictures to oust German prints from the Indian market. Since there was no copyright law for visuals in India, the competition was cut-throat, and included the undercutting of prices and plagiarizing from whatever source available. It is difficult to judge the volume of this trade, and the real reason of the financial failure of some of the early Indian picture-printing presses. It might have been that the German prints fulfilled the expectations of Indian patrons to a larger extent than the early presses of Calcutta or Poona. It was only after the German chief technician of the Ravi Varma Press—Fritz Schleicher—took over the ultimate control of production in 1903 that the printing of visuals became a financially viable and highly remunerable business. With Schleicher were a number of other German master printers, one of them the young P. Gerhardt, who was himself a painter of sorts. Some of his large canvases survived, one even in the Jagan Mohan Palace of Mysore, showing an outstanding portrait of the Maharaja. Gerhardt painted in the style of the popular European oriental genre pictures, with unabashedly radiant females clad in as little apparel as the climate permitted, and preferably close to a sheet of water.

That Ravi Varma was no stranger to that genre as well, becomes clear from paintings such as *At the Bath* for which he tried to recruit models from among the Hyderabad prostitutes, which—as his brother remarks in the diary—was not easy, on account of their shyness in modelling before the eye of the camera, 'although they are ready when called for immoral purposes!' (Diary 15 February 1902). Since there exists a painted picture (*see* Pl. 37D), one of the girls must have braved the eye of the camera, and so was immortalized. The painting was hailed as a compliment to the beauty and chastity of the womanhood of Malabar, although one early critic remarked, that the woman in the painting does not possess 'the innocent purity of the unsipped blossom' (Pillai, S.A., 1928: 28).





A
B C D

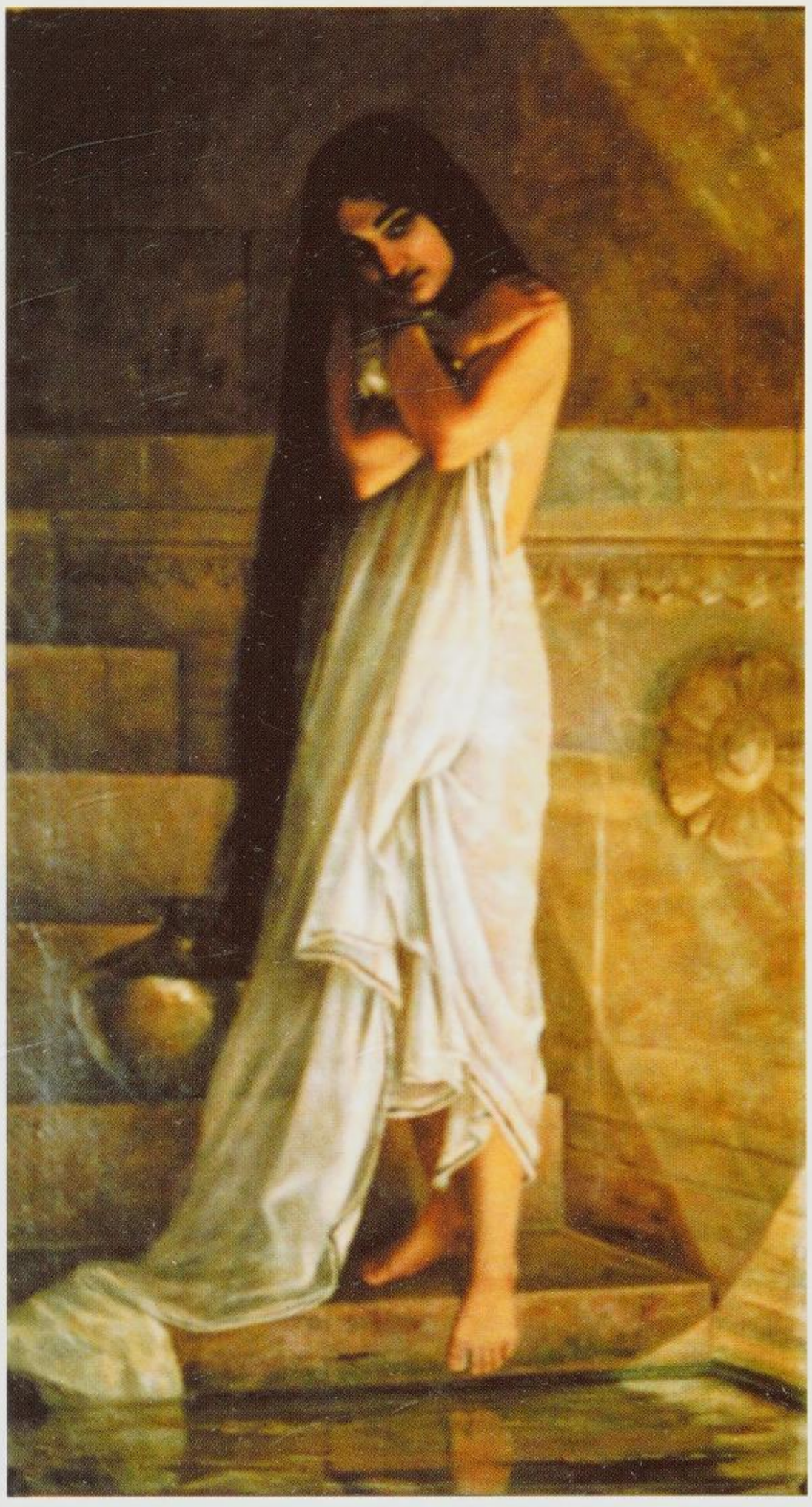
Plate 37:

A. *Shakuntala* (?). Oil painting by P. Gerhardt, 1898.

B, C. Studies. Pencil on paper by Ravi Varma, n.d. (*c.* 1880).

D. *At the Bath*. Oil painting by Ravi Varma, 1902.

P. Gerhardt, a young German printer in the Ravi Varma Press, was also a gifted painter, trying his hand at Indian mythological themes (*See* Diary 29 January 1899).



A B C D

Plate 38:

A. Girl reclining on a cane sofa.
Photograph, n.d (*c.* 1900).

B. *Reclining Lady*, Oil painting
by Ravi Varma (?), n.d.

C. 'Sangal Depaki Rani' (Lady reclining on a sofa). Oleograph, (*c.* 1920), The Bolton F.A.L. Press, Tardeo, Bombay.

D. *Nude*. Oil painting
by Ravi Varma, n.d.
Although C. Raja Raja Varma mentions how difficult it was to get girls to sit as models, there are several photographs of women posing quite uneasily, looking rather awkwardly into the eye of the camera, suggesting that they were casual girls picked up for the job of modelling.

A B
C

Plate 39:

A. Unidentified woman.
Photograph: Bhavani Ram, Mathura, n.d. (*c.* 1895).

B. Unidentified woman.
Photograph: 'The Bengal Photographers Estbd. 1862, 19/3 Bow Bazar Street, Calcutta'. Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1900).

C. 'The Tanjore Girls'. Nautch girls at the court of Baroda. Photograph, n.d. (*see* Diary 19 January 1895).
A life-size statue of the dancing girls in the very position shown here was sculpted and cast in bronze by the Italian artist A. Felici for the Fateh Singh Palace in Baroda. It is said that Ravi Varma cooperated with Felici.

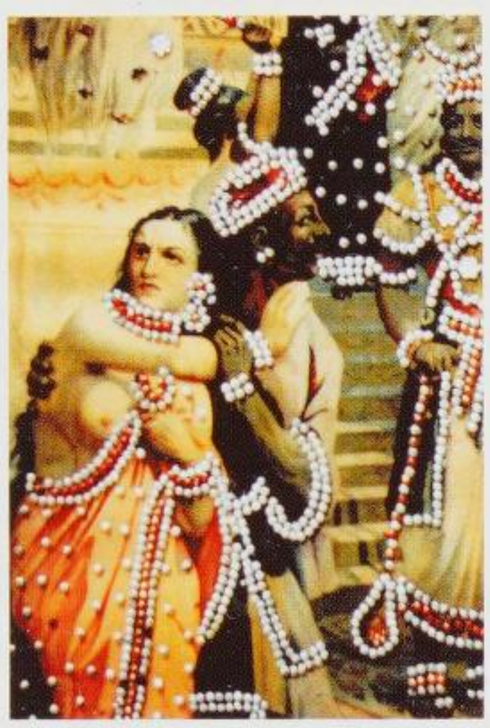


Plate 40:

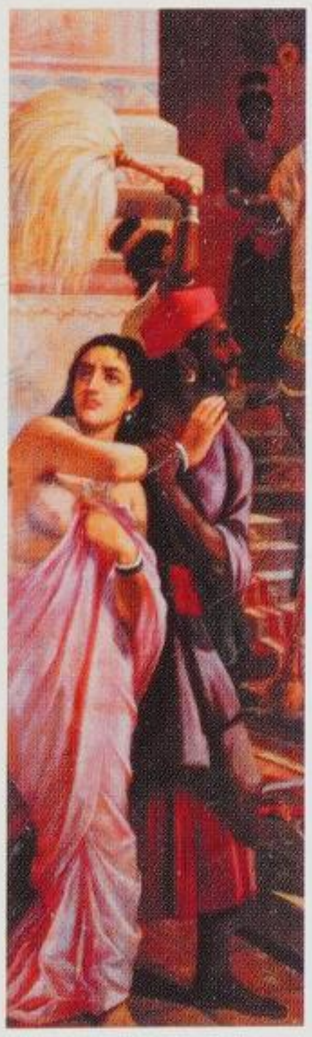
A
B C D

A. Enrico de Serra, *Die Kriegsbeute* (Spoils of war), 1881. Wood engraving in Moderne Kunst, Berlin, n.d. (1895).

B, D. Details from 'Indrajit', Oleograph, partly enhanced by silver foil, printed by Ravi Varma Press (*c.* 1905).

C. Detail from de Serra's *Spoils of War.*

Several instances can be shown where Ravi Varma used European paintings as models for his own mythological paintings. The more obvious instances of such adoption is Ravi Varma's famous painting *Indrajit*, where he used Enrico de Serra's painting *Spoils of War* as a model.



A B
C D

Plate 41:

A. The painting *Indrajit* shows the victory of Meghanand, son of Ravana and general of the Demons, over Indra, Lord of the Gods. In Ravi Varma's painting, Meghanand is shown as presenting the spoils of war to his father Ravana. The most prized booty of the campaign was Sachi, the heavenly nymph. The painting was part of the last great commission of paintings to the court of Mysore in 1905.

B. C. Details from de Serra's *Spoils of War.*

D. Detail from *Indrajit.*

A

B C

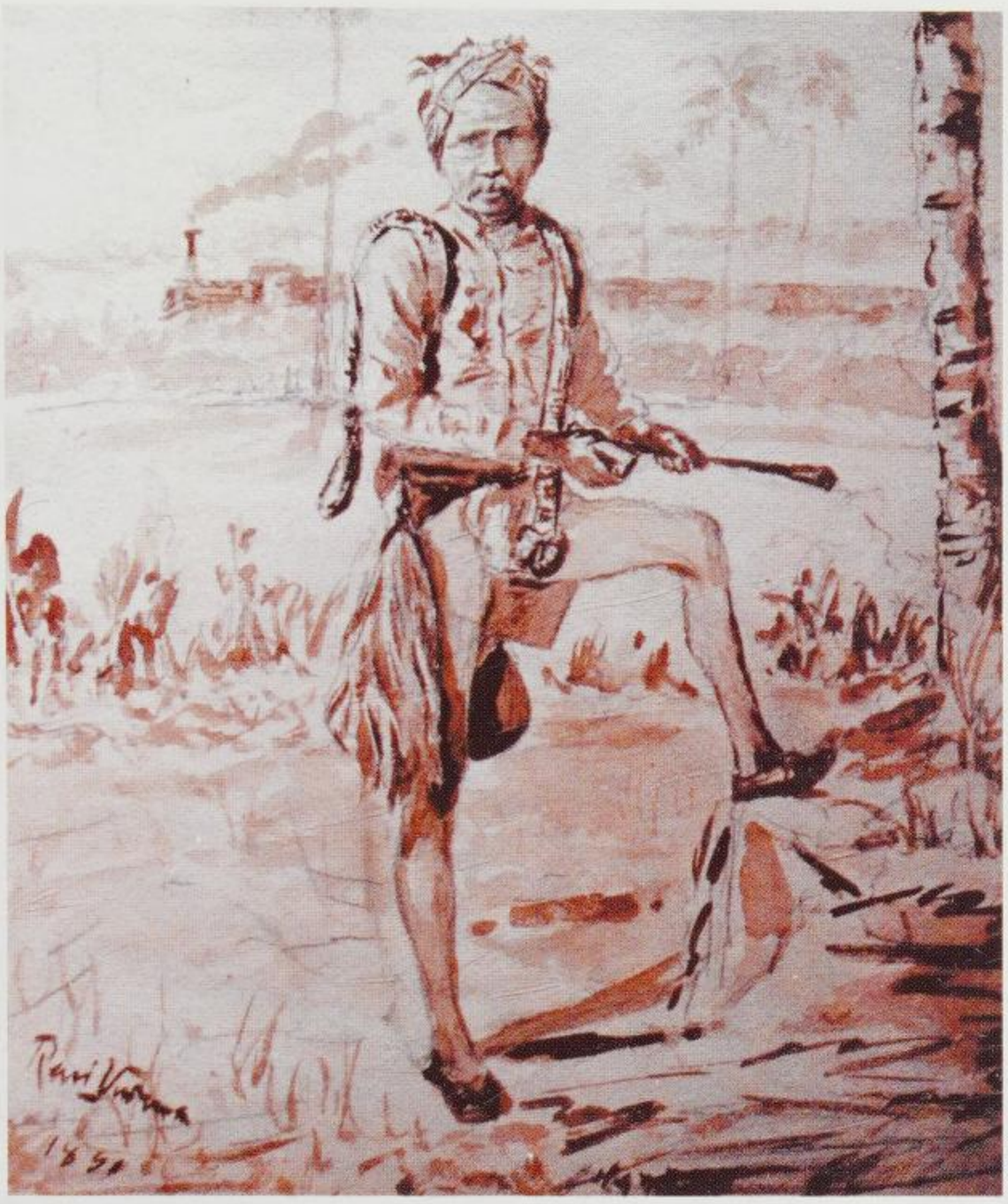
Plate 42:

A. *Passing time in a waiting room.*
On the wall, note the advertisement of Pears soap.

B. *Haggling with the porter in the station.*

C. *Sailboat.*

Not many sketches by Ravi Varma are known. It is reported that he made his drawings mainly in retrospect, from memory during the night. A few remaining sketches are obviously done during rail journeys. These sketches are extremely faint and with a surprisingly unsure hand. Also, the more finished drawings, as the ones published here, rarely show the quality of the artist's oil paintings. Still, the drawings are valuable documents illustrating episodes from train journeys, people's portraits, etc. In many cases, it can be found that Ravi Varma's drawings, ink-wash pictures and even watercolour sketches are drawn from photographs.



A
B C

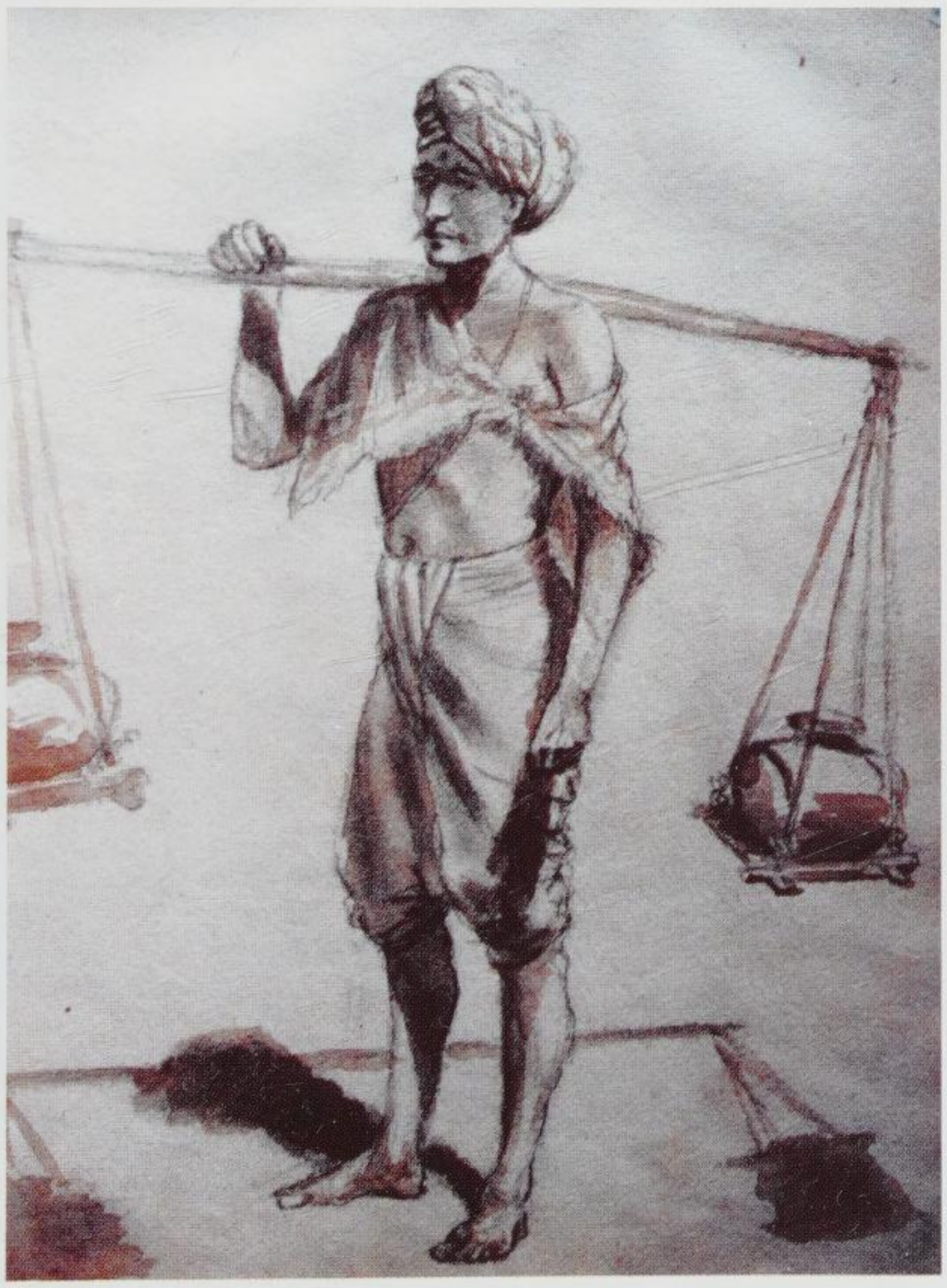
Plate 43:

A. *Toddy tapper.* A train is shown in the background. Signed Ravi Varma, 1890.

B. *Porter.*

C. *Girl at the tap.* Signed Ravi Varma, n.d.

Quite a number of sketches are in the tradition of 'Company Paintings'; daily scenes like women washing clothes at a tap, recording one of the new innovations—piped water—musicians, and, of course, the rather rustic street professionals such as barbers, beggars, mendicants, and chilum-bearers, all with the wares and tools of their trade.



A B
C D

Plate 44:

A. *Barber.*

B. *Moslem praying.*

C. *Faquir.*

D. *Chilum-bearer.*

A B
C D
E F

Plate 45:

A. *Rajput Gentleman*, n.d. (*c.* 1901). On the drawing sheet are impressions of Ravi Varma's personal horse head seals.

B. *Man with burnous*, n.d.

C. *Woman from Himachal* (?), n.d. (*c.* 1895).

D. The Italian photographer Sabina in Egyptian attire (Diary 7 and 18 February 1902).

E. Portrait study, n.d.

F. Portrait study, n.d.

A
B C

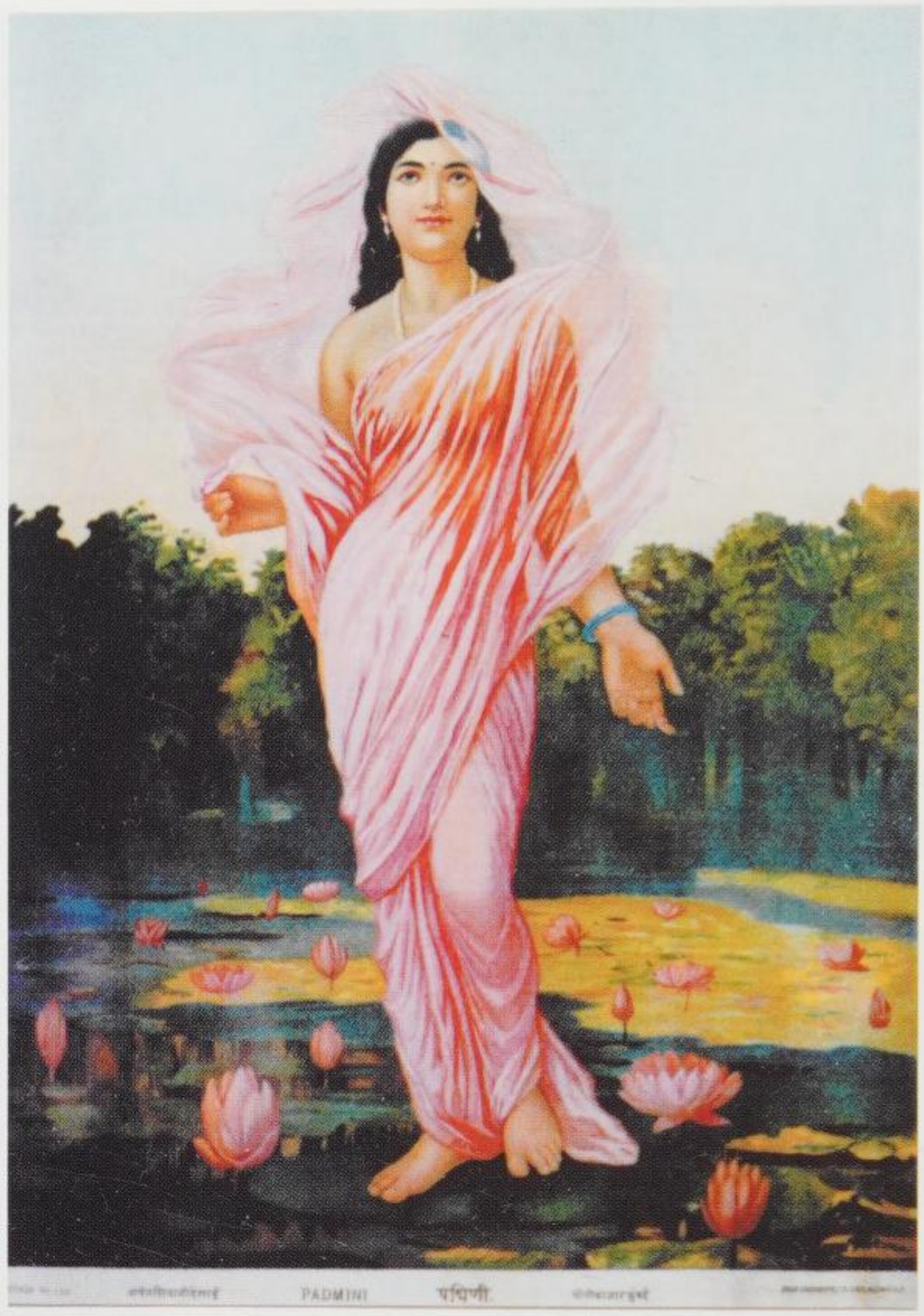
Plate 46:

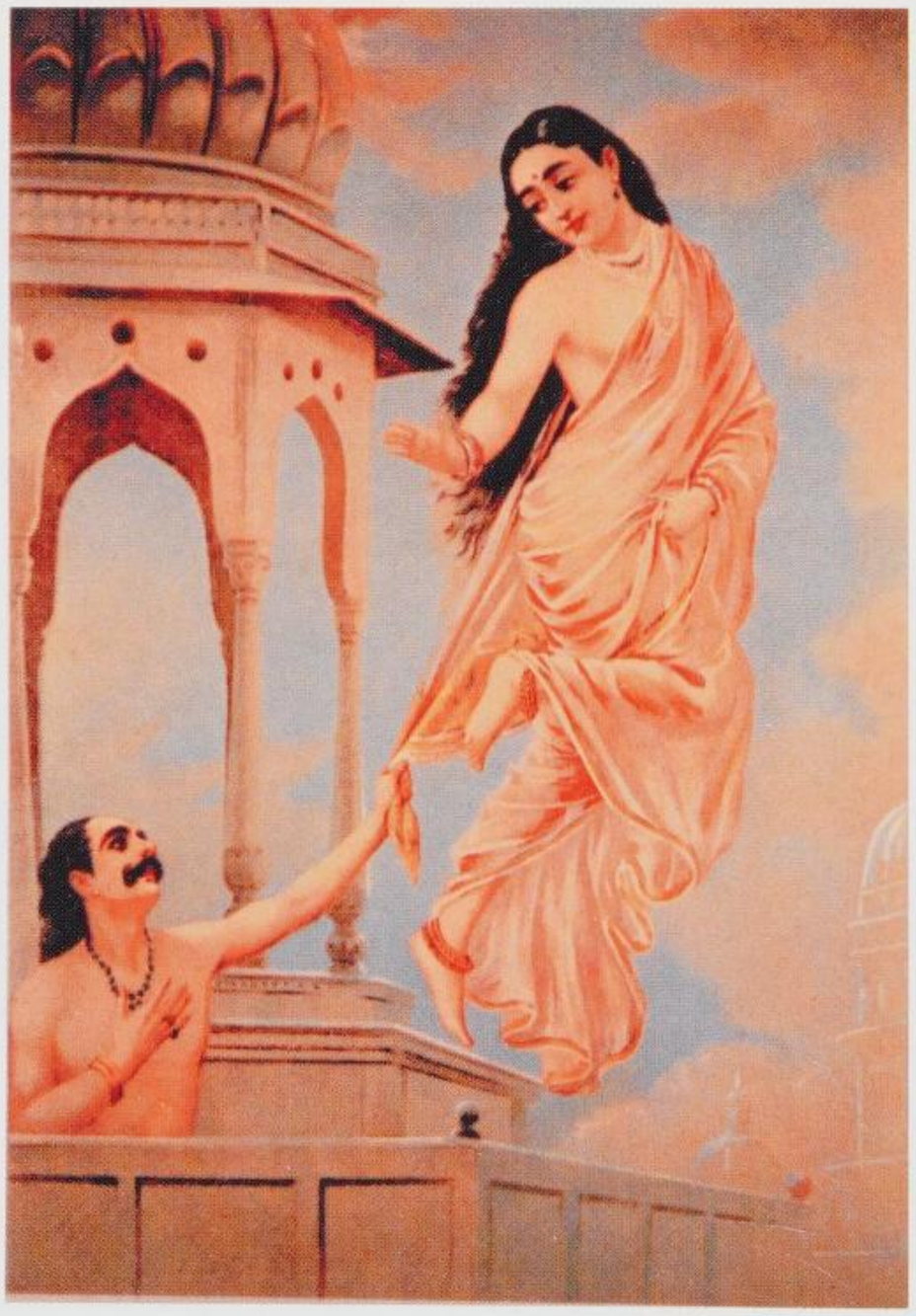
A. 'Padmini' (Lakshmi, goddess of wealth). Oleograph (*c.* 1900).

B. 'Urvashi'. The nymph Urvashi was the spouse of a prince. When the gods became jealous they recalled her by a trick. Oleograph (*c.* 1900).

C. Urvashi. Original litho stone for the colour pink.

'Wind playing with ladies' garments', a popular theme in Indian display prints, might go back to similar European prints. The wind god ravishing women is as much a theme in ancient Indian lore as it is in Europe. Zeus sired Ganyamed, disguising himself as a cloud; the Indian wind god fanned Anjana's robes aside and so became father to Hanuman. Mythology is unabashedly used to show sparsely clad women under the garb of religious tradition.





A B
C D

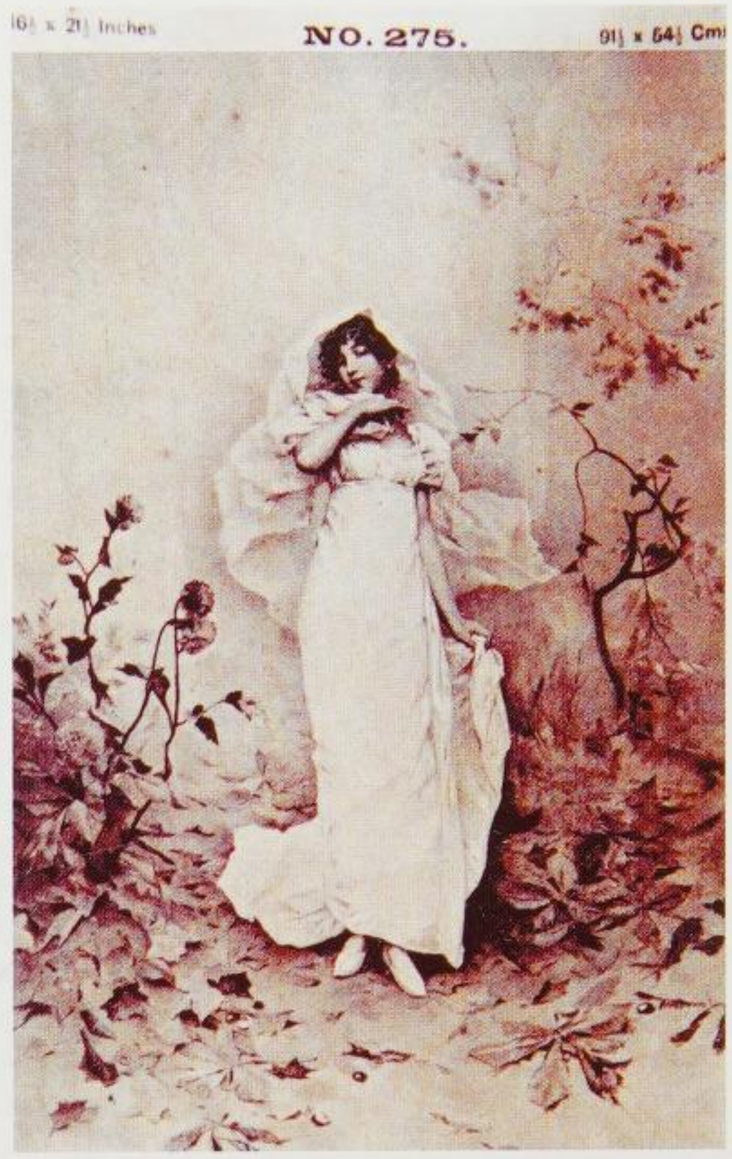
Plate 47:

A. *Padma*. Pencil sketch by Ravi Varma, n.d. (*c.* 1894).

B. *Lady in autumn breeze* from an English print catalogue in the library of Ravi Varma, n.d. (*c.* 1900).

C. Pencil sketch by Ravi Varma done most probably as a preliminary to the picture of *Padmini*, n.d. (*c.* 1898).

D. 'Vasant' (Spring). This season is in India generally depicted as a youth, but here it is a girl. Oleograph (*c.* 1900).



A

B C

Plate 48:

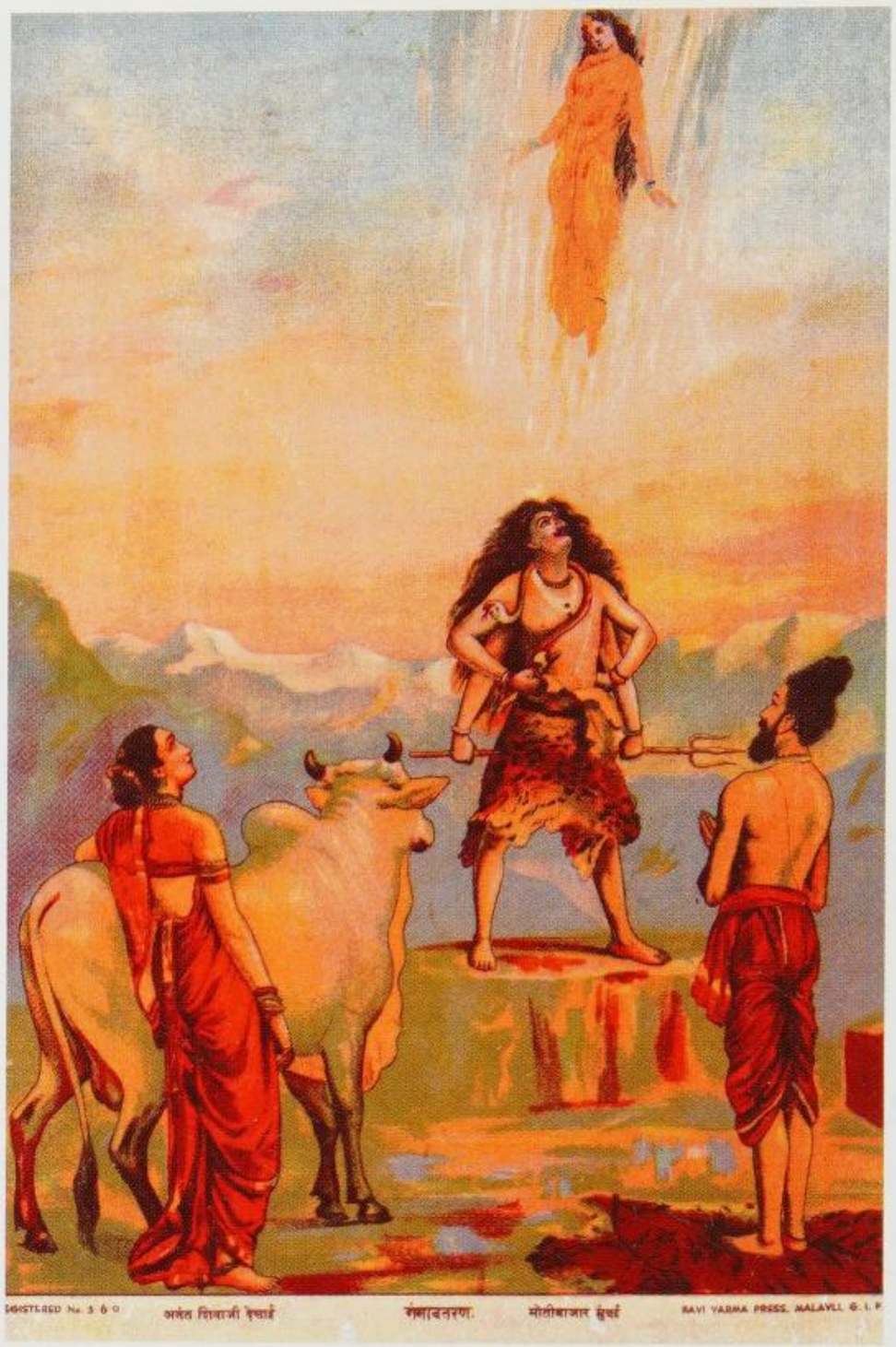
A. 'Gangavataran'. Oleograph, printed (*c.* 1900).

B. *Parvati and Nandi*. Pencil sketch by Ravi Varma, n.d. (*c.* 1894).

C. Preliminary sketch for 'Gangavataran'.

Ravi Varma prepared more than 100 oil paintings to be reproduced in the Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press, almost to his last days in 1906, even when his ownership of the Press had ceased long ago. These paintings were in the sizes of the intended prints, mostly in oil on board.

Descent of Ganga or 'Gangavataran' was one of the earliest prints from the Ravi Varma Press. Several preparatory sketches for this composition were identified in one of the existing sketch books of the artist, showing different versions of the theme.



A C
B
D

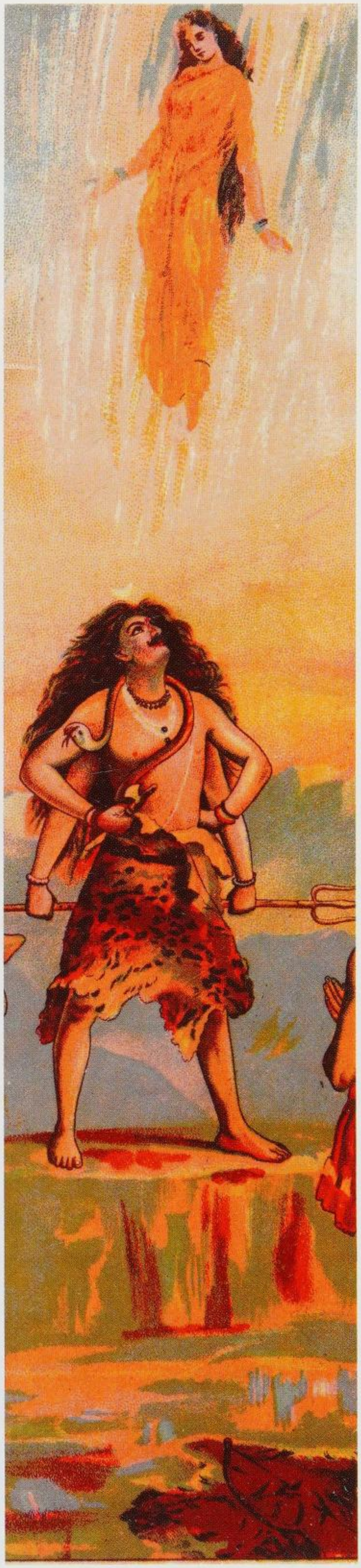
Plate 49:

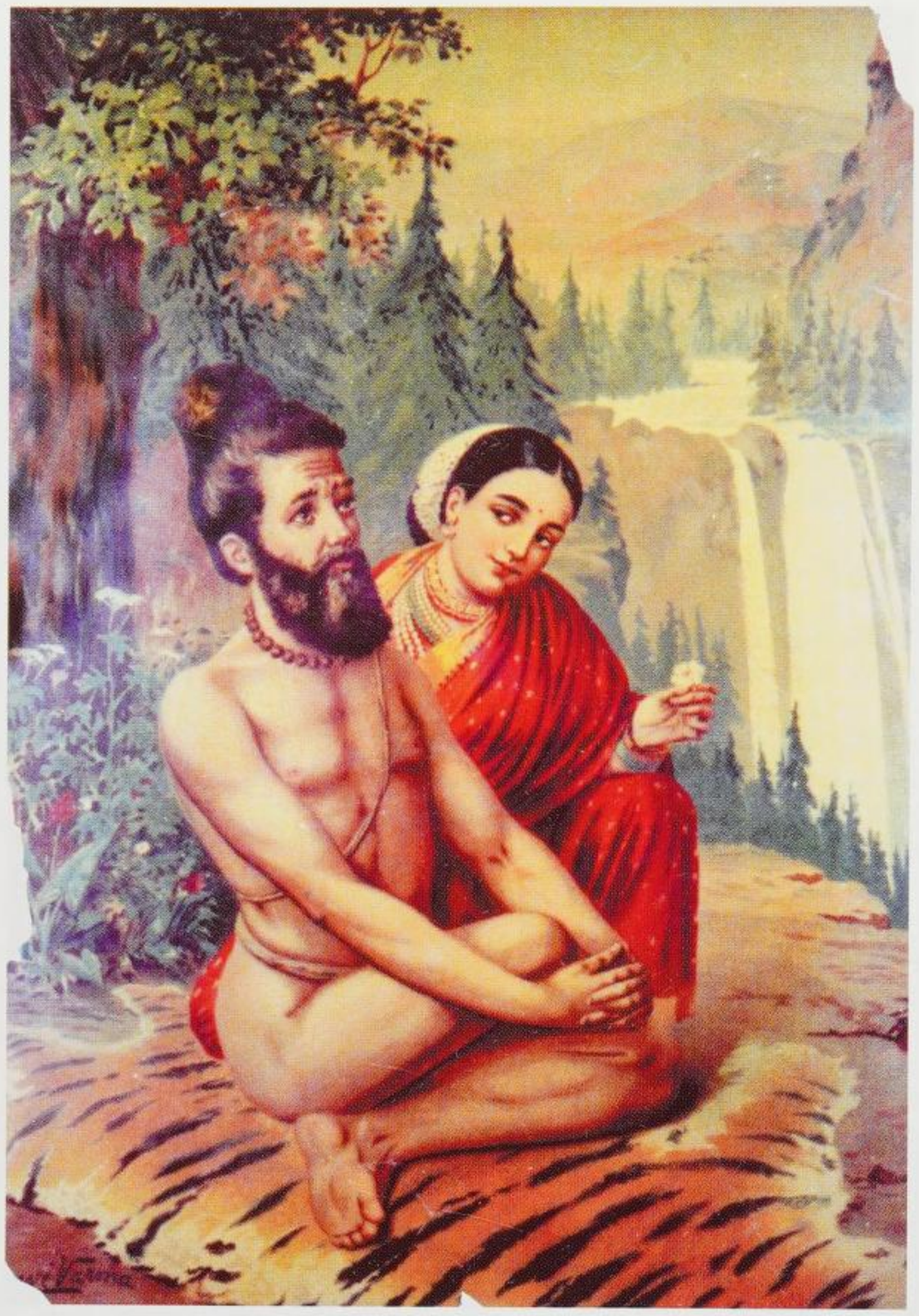
A. *Gangavataran.*
Pencil sketch by Ravi Varma,
n.d. (*c.* 1894).

B. Sketch of Shiva.

C. 'Descent of Ganga'.
Oleograph (detail).

D. Nandi, the bull of Shiva.





A B

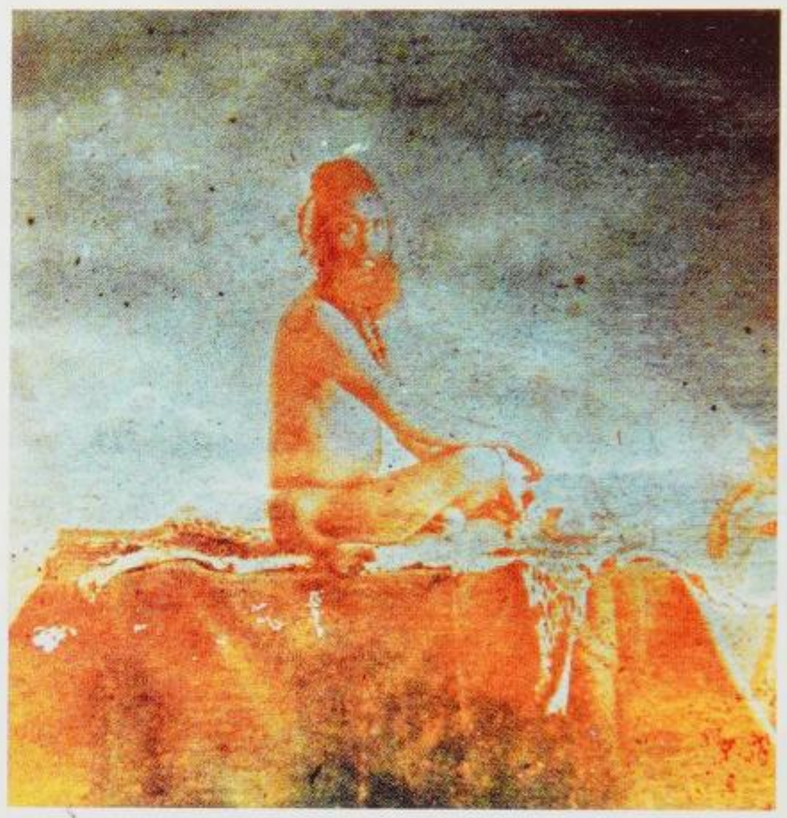
C

Plate 50:

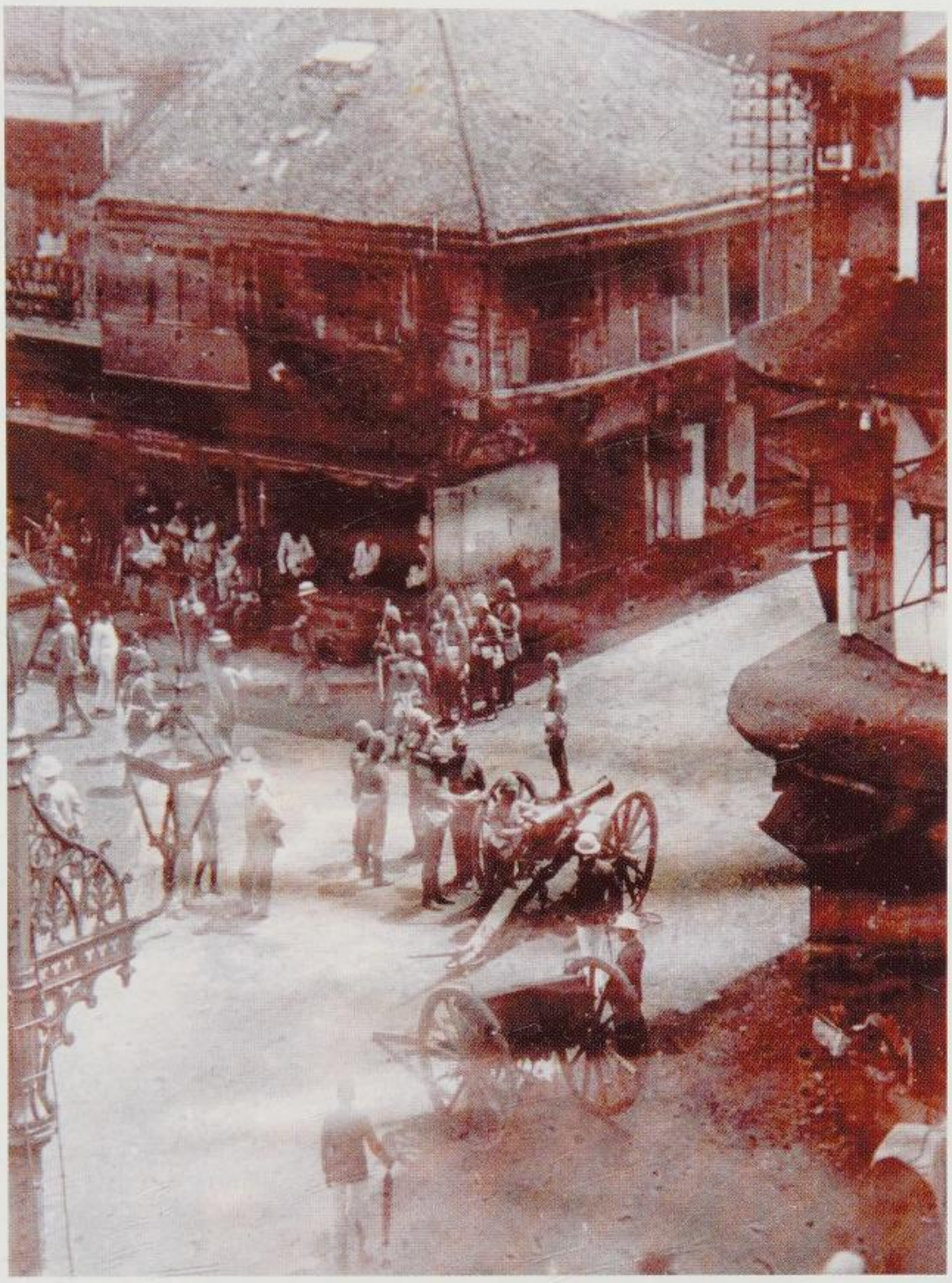
A. 'Vishvamitra and Menaka'.
Oleograph, *c.* 1905, from a painting
by Ravi Varma from 1890.

B. 'Sadhu sitting on a panther skin'.
Photograph (reversed), n.d. (*c.* 1895).
This photograph might have served as a model
for the figure of Vishvamitra.

C. 'A Naga Sadhu'. Photograph:
Imp. Del Tufo & Co., Madras, Bangalore.
Photograph n.d. (*c.* 1900).



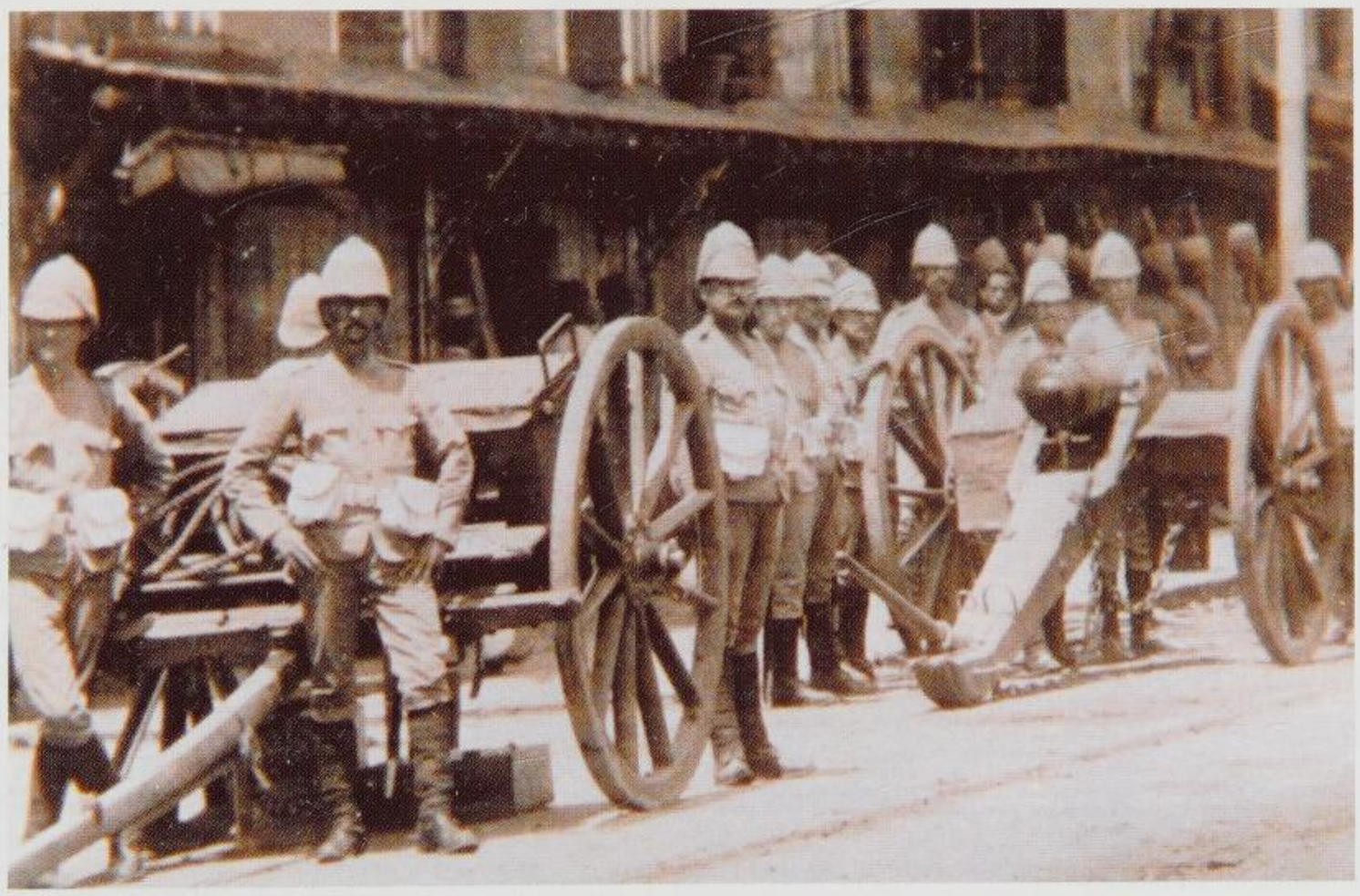
The Hindu-Muhammadan quarrel at Bombay.



A B
C

Plate 51:

Photographs inscribed 'The Hindu-Mohammedan quarrel at Bombay' found in the library of Ravi Varma, showing British soldiers quelling a riot in downtown Bombay. Photographs n.d. (*c.* 1895).



A B

C

Plate 52:

A. The House of Kilimanur, Ravi Varma's ancestral home. The reconstruction of the original court in Anglo-Indian architecture was started by Ravi Varma. Photograph, 1994.

B. Religious mendicant on the threshold of the Kilimanur court.
Oil sketch by C. Raja Raja Varma, n.d. (*c.* 1900).

C. Ravi Varma's studio at Mavelikara, at the ancestral court of Ravi Varma's wife Pooruruttati Nal.
Photograph, 1996.

A

B

Plate 53:

A. The ancestral home of Pooruruttati Nal in Mavelikara. Ravi Varma and his wife spent their married life here. Photograph, 1996.

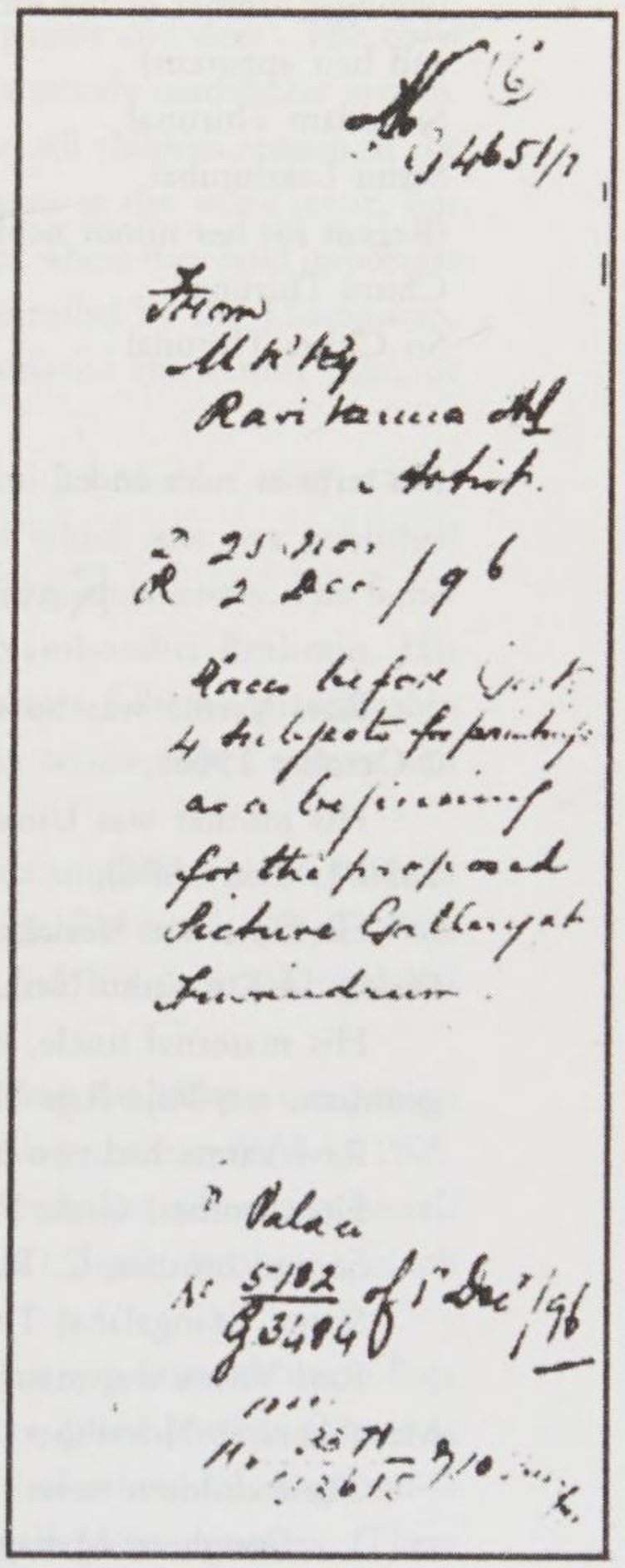
B. Ravi Varma's atelier in his mother's court of Kilimanur. Photograph, 1994.

Plate 54:

Kilimanur, a view through the entrance gate (*see also* Pl. 52B). Photograph, 1994.

Chronology

This Chronology is like a patchwok which grew with our research on the Varma brothers as quick reference. The source material on the brothers is quite scattered and mostly of a secondary nature. All along, the authors tried to place the more reliable notes and the dated information in a chronological order. It is more than strange that with all the fame that Ravi Varma commands, there is no single reliable list of paintings, nor are the paintings in the more approachable galleries always correctly dated or named. Often the signature and date are covered by the frame, or obscured by many years of dust, neglect, or restoration attempts. Written sources are even harder to come by. The letters found in the archives were pasted on thick paper for display during the archive's jubilee shows, obscuring the writing at the back side of the letter. Fortunately, a photograph held against a lamp and a long night at the computer were able to restore the wording. The authors are aware that this Chronology is at most an initial attempt to bring order to the scattered source material. Because of its patchy nature, they were not sure to place it before the reader at all, but then decided for it, since more stringent art historical researches on the Varma brothers are expected, and then any chronological order will be of help.



Placing before Government....
Letter from Ravi Varma to the Dewan concerning paintings for the proposed Art Gallery at Trivandrum, December 1896.

The Rulers of Travancore

The beginning of the Malayalam era is 17 August 824.

Chronology of the rulers of Travancore

Travancore Rulers	*Term of Rule*
Swati Thirunal	1829–47
Uttaram Thirunal	1847–60
(younger brother of the former)	
Ayilyam Thirunal	1860–80
Vishakam Thirunal	1880–5
(younger brother of the former and heir apparent)	
Srimulam Thirunal	1885–1924
Sethu Lakshmibai	1924–1931
(Regent for her minor nephew Chitra Thirunal)	(7 November 1896–1983)
Sri Chitra Thirunal	1931–1946
	(7 November 1912–1991)

His term as ruler ended in 1946 when Travancore joined the Indian Union.

Ravi Varma Chronology

Ravi Varma was born in Kilimanur on 29 April 1848 and died on 2 October 1906.

His mother was Uma Ambabai Thampuratty (born 25 Medam 1007, 1830/1, died 1886).

His father was Neelakantan Bhattatiripad of Ezhumavil Illom of Kandamer Desom in Kunnathu Nadu, a Namboodiri Brahmin.

His maternal uncle, who in a matrilinear family takes the role of the guardian, was Raja Raja Varma (1813–84).

Ravi Varma had two brothers and one sister.

First brother: Gode Varma (1854–1904).

Second brother: C. Raja Raja Varma (3 March 1860–4 January 1905).

Sister: Mangalabai Thampuratty (1866–1953).

Ravi Varma was married to Bhagirathi, Pooruruttati Nal Thampuratty of Mavelikara (?–November 1891).

Their children were:

1. Daughter: Mahaprabha (1871/2–8 January 1919), mother of Sethu Lakshmibai, her first daughter (19 November 1895–1985), the Senior Rani and later Regent of Travancore (1924–31).
2. Son: Kerala Varma (1874/5–?).

3. Daughter: Kochukunji (1877/8–?), mother of Sethu Parvatibai, her first daughter (7 November 96–1983) the Junior Rani of Travancore and mother of the last Maharaja of Travancore, Sri Chitra Thirunal Bala Rama Varma (7 November 1912–1991).
4. Son: Rama Varma 'Painter' (1879/80–1967).
5. Daughter: Cheria Ayilyam Thampuratty (1881/2–?).

(The children in a matrilinear system belong invariably to the lineage of the mother. Therefore, all Ravi Varma's children belong to the house of Mavelikara, the ancestral place of Ravi Varma's wife.)

1848

Ravi Varma (RV) was born in Kilimanur on 29 April 1848, into the aristocratic lineage of Kilimanur, which means 'the land of parrot and deer'. The royal clans of Travancore are traditionally organized in a strictly matrilinear system, where the inheritance goes through the female line. All children remain in the mother's lineage, spouses are accepted only as guests at the wife's court, but remain invariably members of their own matrilineage, where they hold important economic and sacral powers. The lineages are controlled by the Thampuran, the brother to the eldest matron, who is considered the senior rani, or the queen.

RV's mother was Uma Ambabai Thampuratty (25 Medam 1007, 1830/1–1886). She was a composer of Tulu operas, of which one was published posthumously by Ravi Varma. It was titled *Parvati Swayamvaram*. His father was Ezhumavil Neelakantan Bhattatiripad, a Namboodiri Brahmin. His maternal uncle, to whom in these matrilinear lineages falls the guardianship over the sisters' offspring, was Raja Raja Varma, an accomplished painter and sculptor in ivory (1813–84).

All brothers and sisters of Ravi Varma were accomplished artists be it in music—like Gode Varma (1854–1904)—or in the fine arts—like C. Raja Raja Varma (CRRV) (1862–4 January 1905), and his sister Mangalabai Thampuratty (1866?–1953).

C. Raja Raja Varma, the youngest brother, became the lifelong companion and assistant of Ravi Varma from 1880 onwards till his premature death in 1905.

Mangalabai Thampuratty (1866?–1953), the youngest sister, was herself a painter of repute, and after her famous brother's death, became a much sought-after portrait artist.

RV had no formal art education; he learned painting from his uncle Raja Raja Varma, who learned art from Alangiri Naidu, a gifted portrait painter at the Travancore court, who had mastered the art of oil-colour painting, and—like the European visiting artists—painted on fairly large-size canvases. (There exists a painting on ivory by Alagiri Naidu showing Uttaram Thirunal, dated 1845, another painting in the Old Palace museum—signed Alangiry and dated 22 July 1839—showing a portrait of Swati Thirunal. The paintings of seven

women in different south Indian attires at the Sri Chitra Art Gallery, Trivandrum, pre-date similar genre paintings by Ravi Varma by more than fifty years.)

Ravi Varma also learned from Ramaswami Naicker, a court painter of Travancore who painted in oil. Naicker did not disclose the art of preparing oil colours to Ravi Varma. It was rather the clandestine help of one of the assistants of Naicker—Arumugham Pillai—which actively helped Ravi Varma in his quest for mastering this technique. Ramaswami Naicker's paintings are basically linear drawings filled in with colour. Artistically, his art was not very accomplished.

1850

Madras School of Art founded.

1854

Calcutta School of Art founded. It later became the famous College of Art, Calcutta.

Gode Varma, the second brother of RV, was born. He became an accomplished musician, and an expert player of the string instrument *svaravith.* He was married to a lady of the court of Mavelikara, with whom he had two daughters and one son. The son died in his thirties as a collector in the British Indian Civil Service (Thampi, K.P.P., 1964).

1855

Annexation of the Maratha Court of Tanjore according to the British Law of Lapse, which stipulated that the country would fall to the British if a lineage had no direct successor.

Abolition of slavery in Travancore. Particularly in the southern parts of the state, slavery was widespread and during this year alone 136,000 slaves were freed.

1858

T. Madhava Rao became Dewan of Travancore and remained in this high office for fourteen years. T[anjore] Madhava Rao was, through all his political life as Dewan of Travancore and later of Baroda, the political preceptor of Ravi Varma. He acquired several paintings by Ravi Varma for the Gaekwar of Baroda, and was instrumental in smothering the waves between the ruler of Travancore—Vishakam Thirunal—and Ravi Varma (*see* 1882).

J.J. School of Arts founded in Bombay. This institution was later to become the famous J.J. College of Arts.

'Upper Cloths Riots' in Travancore. The population of lower castes in Travancore was under obligation to uncover their chest in temples and in the presence of higher-caste people. The protest was an old-standing one which goes back to the early years of the Christian mission in southern Travancore in 1828.

1859

…Till 1830 low cast [*sic*] women, by the custom of the country were not allowed to cover their bosom and though the Government of Travancore passed an enactment in which it was clearly laid down that lower cast female converts to Christianity were at liberty to cover their bosoms with jackets, they were forbidden to adopt the custom of high cast Hindu women.

The missionaries of the London mission society objected to this prohibition, which was subsequently removed in 1859… (Rees, J.D., 1891: 140).

But it seems that the old custom died hard, since in 1869 there was again a circular of the Dewan to the Peshkars stipulating against the practice of baring the bosom by women in temples.

1860

C. Raja Raja Varma (CRRV) (3 March 1860–4 January 1905). He received an English education together with the first prince Aswathi Thirunal.

1862

RV shifts to Trivandrum court (Swayamvara before king Ayilyam Thirunal).

1866

Mangalabai Thampuratty born (d.1953). Youngest sister of RV. She became a painter in her own right, and after the death of her famous brother, was a much sought-after portrait artist. She had two sons, K.R. Ravi Varma 'Artist', who became a famous portrait painter in Kerala and K. Raja Raja Varma, who became a chief engineer, PWD, Travancore.

Marriage of RV to Bhagirathi, known as Pooruruttati Nal Thampuratty of Mavelikara. She was the younger sister of Rani Lakshmibai—the Senior Rani of Travancore—who later adopted two of her sister's—RV's wife's—granddaughters as Ranis of Attingale. The younger Rani's eldest son ultimately became the last king of Travancore.

Paintings (by RV) during the year 1866:

Attingal Mootha Thampuram and *Sethu Lakshmibai* (painting of a young couple, n.d.) with a concoction of oil and pigment.

Kerala Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran—the famous Malayali littérateur and educationist, hailed as the Kalidasa of Travancore—who was the husband of Rani Lakshmibai—brought oil-colours from Madras for RV.

Ramaswami Naicker of Madurai—a court painter and close to the junior Raja, the younger brother of the king—refused to teach RV.

Naicker's assistant Arumugham Pillai helped RV clandestinely.

1868

Theodore Jensen, a Danish painter, arrived at the Travancore court with an introduction from Viceroy Sir John Lawrence. He allowed RV to watch him while he painted (Varma, K.M., 1964).

Paintings (by RV):

Valiya Koil Thampuran and Lakshmibai (the adopted Senior Rani).

Ayilyam Thirunal and his Wife, which Theodore Jensen had painted as well.

1869

Circular by Sir T. Madhava Rao, against the baring of the upper body of Nair ladies during worship.

Circular to Peshkars AD 1869:

> Whereas His Highness the Maha Raja deemed it quite repugnant to ideas of decency that Nair females should lower the upper cloth in token of respect, when in the presence of men entitled to great deference [at] which such females are doing service in the Pagodas and Bottarums, you are hereby directed to inform the people concerned that they need not adhere to so objectionable customs.
>
> All classes of His Highness' native subjects are to be generally impressed with the desirableness of the dressing in full compliance with the demand of decency.
>
> You are to see, that the persons in charge of Pagodas, Bottarums etc. do not prevent such compliances.
>
> Sig. Madhava Rao

1870

Pilgrimage of RV and three companions to the shrine of Mookambika in northern Kerala now in South Canara District, Karnataka. RV underwent traditional austerities in worship of the deity to get enlightenment as to the direction of his life's quest.

Paintings:

Family Portrait of Khizhakke Krishna Menon, which RV painted during his return journey from the Mookambika Temple. (Khizhakke Krishna Menon was to be the father-in-law of the later president of the Indian National Congress, Sir C. Sankaran Nair.)

Maharaja Ayilyam Thirunal and his consort.

Ayilyam Thirunal presented RV with the Vira Sringhala (Bangle of Honour), which aroused the jealousy of Ramaswami Naicker. RV spent the next three years between Trivandrum and Mavelikara where his wife and children lived.

RV received an honorarium of Rs 50 a month as palace artist. During that time he came to Kilimanur only on special occasions. He was particularly close to his brother Gode Varma, a lover of music. RV's younger brother C. Raja Raja Varma (CRRV) was at that time studying under an English tutor, and under RV's training showed an extraordinary talent in painting.

RV's sister Mangalabai Thampuratty was taught painting by her uncle Raja Raja Varma.

1871

Lord Napier, Governor of Madras, giving a talk at the Native Christian Literary Society in Madras in 1871 on the fine arts of India, was of the opinion, that:

...in all schools of painting there is a style which deals with the idea and the allegorical. In this method...the virtues, the graces, the sciences, the arts, the powers of nature, the heavenly bodies and other abstract conceptions and agencies are clothed in human forms which owe their majesty or their terrors to the artist, and which are employed in actions and offices proper to their characters. The painters of Europe in compositions of this nature, have largely employed the apparatus of the Greek mythology; but Greece itself cannot supply ideal figures more calculated to enhance or awe the mind than those which adorn the mythology of the Vedic Period of India. In that primitive Pantheon, the powers of nature appear either as separate Divinities or as attributes of one. The waters which embrace the world, the rain which refreshes and nourishes mankind, the fire which vivifies or consumes, Death which opens his dark mansion to all living beings, the Earth, the Sky, the Seasons, Day, Night and Dawn are all personified and glorified with their proper attributes and functions. In all the portraiture of these powers with their appropriate accessories and duties how vast a field is opened for an Indian Pencil. The form of Indra, with his attendant breezes hovering over the famished plains of Hindustan, might surely more than rival the triumphant flight of the Italian Aurora with her galaxy of Hours.... Next to the Vedic mythology as a source of Artistic inspiration, come the two legendary Epics, the Mahabaratha [*sic*] and the Ramayana containing the most inexhaustible and diversified stores of pictorial representation which any country possesses. Transfused in detached and episodic forms from the classical original into the vernacular languages of India these forms have become the popular currency of festivity and fancy, of learning and of faith. They are sounded by every musician, they are recited by every school boy, they are sculptured on every temple, they pass before the Raja in his diversions, they are conned by the Brahmin in his books, they are married to the measured labour of the fountain, they are chanted to the cadence of the oar. All that is needed to promulgate their beauty and complete their fame is that in their purer and nobler passages and with the powers of European Art, they should engage the service of the national pencil as they have fastened on the national memory and animated the national voice.

Lord Napier also indicated the subjects he wanted to be painted: 'The steps of the village tanks, cattle in rice fields, crowds at religious processions, mourners returning from the place of cremation...in such scenes the native painters could work in abundant vain.' (Pillai, S.A., 1964: 19)

1872

Frictions between Maharaja Ayilyam Thirunal and his younger brother Vishakam Thirunal.

Sir T. Madhava Rao, the Dewan of Travancore and the tutor of Vishakam Thirunal (the heir apparent), was dismissed on charges of favouritism since he was close to the critics of the ruler.

Kerala Varma (1845–1914), consort of Rani Lakshmibai, elder sister of Ravi Varma's wife, was incarcerated first in Alleppy and later at Haripad on charges of political conspiracy. He was released only when Vishakam Thirunal ascended the throne in 1879–80).

RV, as husband of the younger sister of the Rani, became persona non grata at the court and retired to Mavelikara, the ancestral home of his wife, where he had erected a two-storeyed building for his use.

1873

RV invited back to the court.

Madras Fine Arts Exhibition Gold Medal, two exhibits by RV.

Paintings:

Nair Lady adorning her Hair with a Garland of Jasmine (Nair Lady at the Toilet).

Height and Depth (Woman giving alms).

Vienna international exhibition. RV sent the prize-winning picture from Madras *Nair Lady at the Toilet* and won a certificate of merit from Vienna. Although this is claimed by even the earliest biographies which were authorized by RV himself, it lacks documentary evidence (*see* Note 204). Ramaswamy Naicker had the painting *A Lady playing an Indian Lute* and an ivory miniature in the exhibition (Mitter, P., 1994: 407–16).

1874

Madras Fine Arts Exhibition; RV again won a gold medal.

His entries were three paintings:

A Tamil Lady playing the Sarabat

A Nair Lady playing the Veena (another title names the picture *Malayalee Beauty reclining on a Couch beneath a Transparent Curtain* which was mentioned by J.D. Rees in his book *H.R.H. The Duke of Clarence and Avondale in Southern India* (*see* Inventory of the Library in Kilimanur), and

Tusker sporting with his Mate in a Sheet of Water.

1875

Pictures were given to the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) by the ruler of Travancore. The painting of a *Nair Lady playing the Veena* was so impressive to the chronicler of the tour of the Prince of Wales, that he mentioned it in the volume he brought out after the tour.

Birth of the eldest son of RV—Kerala Varma—(who showed promise as a painter but later became a profligate).

1876

RV won a gold medal again at the Fine Arts Exhibition at Madras.

Paintings:

Shakuntala Patralekhan (Shakuntala's love letter to Dushyanta).

This painting was bought by Lord Buckingham, Governor of Madras. Sir Monier Williams, who had published a translation of *Shakuntala* in 1855, reproduced this painting as a frontispiece in one of the later editions of the book.

1878

Paintings: RV painted the *Duke of Buckingham* (Governor of Madras).

While returning from Madras, RV met Sir Seshayya Sastri at Tiruchirapalli. Sastri was a former Dewan of Travancore, and was relieved of his office by one of the frequent vendettas between the different branches of the courtly families. He was instrumental in the later adoption of Ravi Varma's granddaughters as Ranis of Attingale. Sastri was the Dewan Regent of Pudukkottai and one of the first native administrators in India. As Rees put it, Sir Seshayya Sastri, C.S.I., was 'one of the ablest of the band of native statesmen who have gone forth from Madras, that Officina Proconsulum, to govern native states all over India (Rees, J.D., 1891: 87). He was the regent for the young ruler of Pudukkottai and a former Dewan of Travancore. He invited RV to Pudukkottai to paint portraits of the members of the royal household. Ravi Varma stayed in Pudukkottai for four months. His youngest brother CRRV accompanied him there for the first time as his assistant.

Sir Seshayya Sastri, C.S.I., was, besides T. Madhava Rao, the most important political preceptor of RV. A letter by him requesting a painting from RV is revealingly clear of the aesthetic preferences of the new administrative middle class:

> *Lady with Flower* is too large for my drawing room. But I would like to have a look at it. You doubt whether I would like to have *Harischandra and Taramati*. It is true, I do not like to keep paintings depicting tragic scenes in my house. I am not interested in *Bombay Singers* which is only a social scene. By constantly looking at your paintings, I have started admiring the pretty faces of your women. So I would like to have paintings of *Krishna with Gopis*, *Coronation of Rama* and *Sita's Swayambara*.... I would like to have a copy of *Nair Lady inside the Mosquito*

Net, which you had presented to the Prince of Wales (Catalogue National Gallery of Modern Art, p. 18).

Several illustrations to Shungunny Menon's *History of Travancore* published in 1878 are ascribed to RV. It seems that this is quite incorrect, since many of the pictures are just lithographic renderings of the oil pictures of Ramaswami Naicker, and of a rather low craftsmanship.

1880

30 May 1880: death of Maharaja Ayilyam Thirunal. His younger brother Vishakam Thirunal was crowned king.

The new king suggested to RV to paint *Sita Bhoopravesam* (Sita's Ordeal).

Visit of the Governor of Madras (The Duke of Buckingham) to Travancore. The governor's eagerness to meet RV caused jealousy in the king. When the Duke met Ravi Varma in the presence of the king, he asked him to sit with them, which, according to the custom of the land was unthinkable. RV declined to sit in the presence of the king and all three, the governor, the king, and the painter, remained standing while talking. RV knew that he was now out of favour with the king and left Trivandrum never to come back during the lifetime of the king.

Sir T. Madhava Rao, who was by then the new Regent of Baroda, visited Travancore.

Paintings: The Maharaja Vishakam Thirunal sold to T. Madhava Rao *Sita's Ordeal* and gifted to him the painting, *Nair Beauty*.

Nair Beauty was sent to the Poona Fine Arts Exhibition and was awarded the Gaekwar Gold Medal. Sir James Fergusson, the Governor of Bombay, required a copy from Sir T. Madhava Rao, wrote to RV thanking him, and presented him with an album of photographs of the British royalty.

Birth of RV's second son Rama Varma (1880–1967), who became a famous portrait painter.

1881

At the close of the year, Ravi Varma was invited to the investiture ceremonies of Maharaja Sayaji Rao III as a state guest in Baroda (arrival in Baroda 24 December 81).

Paintings:

Gaekwar in Investiture Robes
Maharani Chinnarbai
Princess Tarabai
Dewan Sir T. Madhava Rao
The British Resident Melville
General Mead (sign. R.V.C.T. 1880)

Mr Elioth (Portrait of the English teacher of the Gaekwar Sayaji Rao; no sign., n.d.).

RV got an order of five paintings on Puranic and religious themes. These were:

Laxmi

Saraswati

Nala and Damayanti

Sairandhri

Sita Siddhi (The realization of Sita).

1882

RV spent four months in Baroda, painting. And although he was invited to many native states, he only visited Bhavnagar in Kathiawar, where he stayed for two months, painting members of the princely family.

Paintings:

The old Dewan (Sign. RV 1882) (now in Bhavnagar Palace Hotel, but obviously heavily retouched).

On his return, he halted for one month in Bombay. A meeting with the king Vishakam Thirunal could not clear the friction between them; on the contrary, the bad feeling between RV and the king was aggravated, and RV broke with the king altogether.

The king discontinued the monthly purse of Rs 50 to RV and even considered having RV excommunicated from his family on grounds of 'unholiness' and 'deviation from observances', particularly for not observing *sradham* (worship of ancestors). Sir T. Madhava Rao intervened on behalf of RV.

RV returned to Kilimanur and presented his uncle Raja Raja Varma (who was in *sanyas* by then) with Rs 1000 (other source: Rs 10,000) as *gurudakhshina,* the ceremonial gift for the teacher.

Paintings:

Portrait of Raja Raja Varma (see Plate 1C).

1883

Paintings:

Lakshmibai Thampuratty (Sign.: RV Koil Thampuran 1883).

In this painting she is shown standing beside a table, her hand resting on the books *Near Rome or Europe Described* and *The Young Ladies' Book*.

In the same year RV also painted *Kerala Koil Thampuran* (n.d. He is shown standing close to a bookshelf, in which the works *Byron's Poetical Works* and the *Chambers' Encyclopedia of English Literature* can be identified).

RV participated in the Calcutta Industrial Exhibition (Winter 1883–4).

1884

Death of RV's maternal uncle Raja Raja Varma, who was his first art teacher. The maternal uncle holds the position of guardian in matrilinear societies, very much like the father in patrilinear societies. RV was in mourning for one year, which meant not shaving and not travelling, besides other austerities.

RV stayed for almost three years in Mavelikara, the ancestral home of his wife, where he had built a two-storeyed villa which he used as an atelier. It is said that a large number of sketches of country scenes stem from this period: *Gypsy Woman*, *Tamil Lady giving Alms at her Doorstep*, *Girl at the Tap*, *Barber and his Client*, *Royal Procession*, *Steps to the Temple Tank*, *Street Dancers*, *Camel Drivers*, *Soldier at Vigil*, *Muslim at Prayer*, *Musician with Sitar*, *Couple at a Park Bench*, *Lions, Elephants, Snakes, Birds, Horses*. This is likely, but in the absence of a systematic collection of drawings, not verifiable.

Paintings:

Sayandri (Sign. RV Koil Thampuran 1884)

Rani Lakshmibai and her Consort Kerala Varma

Mr Thompson (Principal of Presidency College, Madras)

Mr Porter (For the Kumbakonam Town Hall).

RV visits Pudukkottai during the visit of Sir M.E. Grant-Duff (Governor).

Painting:

Durbar: This painting is particularly interesting since, on the same occasion, a traditional court painter of Pudukkottai painted the same scene. Both paintings are on exhibition in the Pudukkottai Museum.

Letter of Sir T. Madhava Rao to RV suggesting that his paintings be printed for wider circulation:

> ...There are many of my friends who are desirous of possessing your work. It would be hardly possible for you, with only a pair of hands, to meet such a large demand. Send therefore, a few of your select works to Europe and have them oleographed. You will thereby not only extend your reputation, but will be doing a real service to the country (Nayar, N.B., 1953).

1885

First session of the Indian National Congress held in Bombay.

RV and CRRV travelled to Mysore on the invitation of Maharaja Sri Chamarajendra Wadiyar. They spent three months painting different members of the royal family.

Painting:

Portraits of the Royal Family in Mysore.

Besides the remuneration for his works, Ravi Varma was presented with two elephants.

Death of the king Vishakam Thirunal, with whom RV was on bad terms (August 1885).

New Maharaja Srimulam Thirunal (ruled from 1885–1924); RV was invited to the coronation ceremonies.

1886

RV sent paintings to the colonial exhibitions in London and later to Calcutta; he won prizes in both, and the Maharaja complimented him.

Paintings:

Judith, a copy after the painting by Jean-Joseph Benjamin Constant. Painting in the Art Gallery, Trivandrum. The original painting by Constant is housed in the Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum, Baroda (Nandakumar, R., 1995: 41–56; Catalogue Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum Trust, Baroda 1981: 17).

Portrait of T.P. Mudhuswamy Ayyar (sign. R. Varma 1886; Madras Fine Arts Gallery) (Muthuswamy Iyer, D.I.E., was the first native who was appointed a high Court judge in India, not more distinguished for his ability as a lawyer than for his command over English, possessed by few of the Englishmen themselves. Mr Muthuswamy's judgments are drawn up in a style that recalls those written in the days of Lord Eldon before the storm and stress of ever-increasing judicial labour had brought about a divorce between elegance and law (Rees, J.D., 1891).

RV's mother Uma Ambabai Thampuratty died (she was a poet and Ayurvedic physician. RV published her Tullal work *Parvati Swayamvaram* and wrote a personal introduction to it. RV stayed in mourning for one year on account of her death.

1887

RV was in Mysore for one month, painting portraits.

Paintings:

Portraits of the Royal Family of Mysore.

A Portrait of Dr Fernell (a friend and admirer of Ravi Varma).

Headmaster of Vijayanagaram (Portrait of a schoolmaster in a school which belonged to the Raja of Vijayanagaram; RV took no remuneration for that) (Varma, K.M., 1964: 15).

Shakuntala and her Mate (copy by R.D. Chitari with RV's signature dated 1887, Museum Aundh).

Sairandhri (copy by D.V. Pandit 1932 with the signature of Ravi Varma 1887, Museum Aundh).

1888

The Gaekwar of Baroda (Sayaji Rao) invited RV to Ooty where he also met Sir T. Madhava Rao. The Gaekwar commissioned fourteen mythological paintings illustrating the national epics Ramayana and Mahabharata for the decoration of the new durbar hall in the new Lakshmi Vilas Palace. They would proclaim the splendour of India's heritage. For this project—and also to fulfil portrait

commissions from native courts—RV and CRRV toured north and south India, where RV and his brother sketched local adornments, clothes, draperies, as well as weapons to serve as models for the proposed epic paintings.

RV chose the sari as the drapery of his epic heroines. The pan-Indian acceptance of the sari as the formal dress for women possibly owes much to Ravi Varma's sari-clad heoines. Even Kerala women at that time took to the sari instead of the *mundu*, the traditional cloth tightened above or below the bosom.

1888 till 1890

RV worked on the fourteen Puranic paintings of the Baroda commission in Kilimanur and Mavelikara, where his studio was on the second floor of Ulsava Madham Palace (Plate 52C; 53B). His helpers were CRRV, his sister Mangalabai Thampuratty, and another assistant—Kilimanur Khunjan Varrier.

Paintings:

Nala Damayanti
Radha and Madhava
Bharata and the Lion Cub
Arjuna and Subhadra
Vishvamitra and Menaka
Shantanu and Ganga
Kamsa Maya
Disrobing of Draupadi
Harischandra and Taramati
Keechak and Sairandhri (also titled: The Beauty and the Beast)
Sita Swayamvaram
Birth of Krishna
Devaki and Krishna
Shantanu and Satyavati

The paintings of the Baroda commission were exhibited at the Trivandrum Museum (*see* 1890).

1889

Paintings:

Galaxy of Musicians (Mysore)
Lady in Moonlight (Mysore, sign. RV 1889)
Malabar Lady

1890

The fourteen paintings of the Baroda commission were exhibited at the Trivandrum Museum.

Paintings:

Portrait of *Col. Brodrie Ketchen* (Sign. RV 1890, Trivandr).

Ganga and Shantanu (copy by R.D. Chitari with the signature RV 1890, Museum Aundh).

Shantanu and Satyavati (copy by D.V. Pandit with the signature RV 1890, Museum Aundh).

1891

Death of Sir T. Madhava Rao.

RV and CRRV left for Baroda in November. While at Bombay, they learned the news of the death of RV's wife. RV and his wife had had five children: two sons—Kerala Varma and Rama Varma—and three daughters.

Paintings:

Sir Prendergast (Sign. R.V.C.T. 1891).

Mrs Rama Natha Rao (Sign. RV 1891) (*See also* Plate 7A, B).

1892

Baroda commission paintings exhibited in Bombay (December 1891–January 1892).

The paintings of the Baroda commission were publicly exhibited for some days and immense crowds of people assembled from all parts of the Bombay Presidency to see the paintings. They produced quite a sensation for a period, for it was the first time that subjects from the great Indian epics had been depicted on canvas so truthfully and touchingly. Hundreds and thousands of their photographs were sold all over India.

Vivekananda saw RV's paintings in Baroda (letter by Vivekananda to Haridas Viharidas of 26 April 92, stating that he has seen Ravi Varma's paintings and the Library, the only things worth visiting there. RV met Vivekananda two months later) (Varma, K.M., 1964: ix.)

February 1892: RV returned to Bombay and conferred with Dadabhai Naoroji about the establishment of a press.

Trivandrum: RV helped the Italian sculptor E. Lanteri in modelling and casting the statue of T. Madhava Rao, which was to be erected in front of the 'Aana Cutchery', the nucleus hall of the now sprawling Secretariat in Trivandrum. This central place is nowadays known only under the cryptic title 'Statue'; the name of the former Dewan Sir T. Madhav Rao is hardly ever remembered.

During this year 'The Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press, Bombay' was established on Kalbadevi Road in Girgaum, Bombay. Production started only in 1894. Meeting with Dadabhai Naoroji who suggested a business partner in the person of Govardhan Das Khatau Makanji. The machines were bought from Germany and several German technicians supervised the initial set-up of

the press and its initial workings. Chief among them was Fritz Schleicher (1862 Berlin (?)–1935 Malavli), the future owner of the Press. Another expert known by name was P. Gerhardt who was an accomplished painter.

RV learned about the World Exposition in Chicago; he was to send ten paintings. He painted five in the last month of 1892 at Kilimanur, the other five at Bombay. By April of 1893, RV went back to Kilimanur.

Paintings:

Malayali Lady (Oval version, sign.: Ravi Varma 1892, Aundh Museum).

1893

World's Columbian Commission International Exposition in Chicago; RV sent ten paintings:

These paintings were:

Malabar Beauty

There comes Papa (His daughter and her little son) dated 1893 (Plates 16,17)

Begum at the Bath (Muslim theme)

Expectation (Hindu lady waiting for her lover) dated 1893, today in Kowdiar Palace where it is presumed to be a portrait of a sea captain's wife.

Decking the Bride (Parsee theme)

Sisterly Remembrance (Maratha theme)

The Gypsy of South India

At the Well

The Disappointing News

The Bombay Singer or *Poverty* (sign. RV 1893, Trivandrum Art Gallery).

RV got two medals and diplomas at the Chicago Exposition.

The text of the diplomas reads:

The United States of America by act of their Congress have authorised The World's Columbian Commission at the international exhibition held in the city of Chicago, State of Illinois, in the year 1893, to degree a medal for specific merit which is set forth below over the name of an individual Judge acting as an examiner, upon the finding of a board of international Judges to Ravi Varma, Trivandrum, Travancore, India.

Exhibit:

Oil Paintings Illustrative of The Life of Native People

Award:

This exhibit of ten paintings in oil colors, by Ravi Varma, court painter to several presidencies of India, is of much ethnological value, not only do the faces of the high-caste ladies which are portrayed give the various types of the localities, but the Artist's careful attention to the details of costume and articles used in the social and ceremonial life he has depicted, renders the paintings worthy of special commendation.

Sign. of the departmental committee; The individual judge; Chairman executive Committee of Awards; President, World's Columbian Commission; Secretary, World's Columbian Commission.

The text of the second award:

Paintings in Oil
AWARD:
The series of well-executed paintings give a good idea of the progress of instruction in Art. They are true to nature and in form and color and preserve the costumes, current fashion and social features.

(Sign)

During the time of the World Exposition, Swami Vivekananda participated at the famous 'Parliament of Religions', which was held in Chicago. During his stay there he might have seen the pictures at the fair. It is said that Vivekananda was received in Bombay on his return from Chicago by Ravi Varma.

Raja Deen Dayal, photographer to the Nizam of Hyderabad, participated successfully at this Exposition as well and, like RV, won a gold medal.

1894

Paintings:

Lady with Mirror (Madras, signed and dated 1894) (Plate 14D)
Portrait of Parvatibai (elder sister of RV's wife) dated 1894.
The Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press started working.
RV commissioned the painting *Lady with a Fan* by the English painter Frank Brooks. The model for this painting was Rajibai (Plates 18A, B), an acquaintance of the Varma brothers and a relative of a foreman in the Ravi Varma Press.

Visit to Pudukkottai during the visit of Sir M.E. Grant-Duff (Governor).
Paintings:

Durbar of Pudukkottai, which is particularly interesting, since the same scene was also painted by a traditional court artist. Both paintings are on display side by side in the Pudukkottai Museum.

Tour with the Prince Aswati Thirunal Martanda Varma, the second prince of Travancore from 18 November 1894 till April 1895. RV, CRRV, and the prince sat in the courtroom during the hearing of a case against a Poona picture merchant who sold 'obscene' prints (Plate 32).

Meetings with Dadabhai Naoroji and Judge Ranade in Bombay.
Paintings:

Damayanti (Damayanti abandoned in the forest; signed: Ravi Varma 1894, Museum Aundh, but obviously a copy).

1895

C. Raja Raja Varma (CRRV) began his diary, which he kept till a few weeks before his death.

The Varma Brothers continued their journey with Martanda Varma at the beginning of the year from Bombay onwards to Rajputana, Delhi, Lahore, Agra, Oudh, Kashi, Calcutta, Tanjavur, Mayavaram, Chindabaram, Srirangam, and Madurai.

CRRV wrote after the journey the travelogue: 'A Tour Through Upper India', based mainly on his diary records.

Paintings:

Portrait of the *Governor of Goa*, a coloured photograph (Diary 11 April 1895).

Ravana carrying Sita (Sign. RV 1895) (Here the vulture has a red comb).

Kerala Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran (with the decoration and robe of the order of the Star of India which he received on 25 May 1895; the painting is signed Ravi Varma but not dated; private collection, Madras).

Moon Daughter (copied by R.D. Chitari 1928 with the signature of Ravi Varma 1895, Museum Aundh; a bathing woman in a wet transparent mundu in a moonlit pond).

First communications between RV and the Dewan on the scheme of establishing an Art Gallery in Travancore (*see also* Note 79).

1896

Hawell becomes principal of Calcutta Art School.

Paintings:

Justice Krishna Aiyer (Sign. Ravi Varma 1896)

Mr Ramanath Rao (Sign. RV 1896) (Plate 7A, B)

Raja Raja Varma, the maternal uncle of RV died; RV was in mourning for one year (Raja Raja Varma's full name was Ithammar Vishakam Thirunal Valiya Koil Thampuran, not to be mistaken with the artist uncle Raja Raja Varma who died in 1884).

RV's request for an Art Gallery moves into the stage of realization. Since he is held up in Kilimanur by the traditional period of mourning on account of his maternal uncle's death he writes:

Kilimanur
26 November 1896
To Ms R. Ry.
S. Shungresoobyer F.M.U.
Dewan
Trivandrum

My dear Sir,

Agreeably to our conversation of the other day I have the pleasure to place before you four subjects for painting as a beginning for the proposed Picture Gallery at Trivandrum.

I think we cannot do better than begin with classical subjects as they appear to the feelings and understanding of the Hindu Mythology and offering a wide field for the

exercise of their talents. It is therefore nothing but just that a Hindu Government like that of His Highness our enlightened Maharaja should extend its patronage to me, a native of the soil, before I am too old to work. My late uncle's Diksha which I am performing has doomed me to spend the next twelve months at home. I hope therefore to be able to finish the four paintings, of which a list is herein enclosed in the course of the year, should I get at an early date the sanction of the Government to take the work in hand. My charges are according to the difficulty of treatment of the subjects, the number of figures they contain and the size of the canvases. Hoping the matter will not fail to receive your earliest attention.

I beg to remain,

My dear Sir,
your most obedient
RAVI VARMA

1)	*The Brave Kusumavati* A group consisting of more than ten figures 5½ feet x 4	Rs 1500
2)	*Draupadi at the Court of Virata* A group of more than ten(?) figures 5½ x 4	Rs 1500
3)	*Damayanti and the Hamsa or Swan* 4½ x 3½	Rs 1000
4)	*Shakuntala assailed by a Wasp calls* *the King to help her* 4½ x 3½	Rs 1000

RV received his reply a few days later:

His Highness the Maha Rajah has been pleased to accord sanction to your proposal to request Mr Ravi Varma to paint the 2nd (Draupadi at the court of Virada) in the list of subjects forwarded therewith, at the figure named by him viz Rs 1500 and to exhibit the pictures to the public.

October 1896, the first occurrences of plague in Bombay. For several years to come, the plague could not be eradicated and severe dictatorial measures to battle the disease were only felt as a harassment of the native population, which lived in densely packed areas under unhygienic conditions. The plague was only eradicated in 1905.

1897

Paintings:

Draupadi at the Court of Virata (Lying on the floor with Keechaka standing behind) (Sign. RV 1897). This was the first Puranic painting to be submitted towards the proposed art gallery in Trivandrum.

RV stayed for eight months in Travancore.

RV did get a contract to paint two paintings yearly for the Travancore state for an average of Rs 2500; he accepted under the condition that a building to house a picture collection be built. When this building was not forthcoming,

RV discontinued the supply of the agreed paintings. Only five paintings were supplied under this contract:

Damayanti and the Swan 26 July 99 (Letter)
Shakuntala looks back in Love 2 May 98 (Letter)
Virata's Court
Draupadi and Simhika 2.5.98 (Letter)
Draupadi at the court of Virata (Sign. RV 1897) 23 November 97 (Letter)
Sairandhri (Draupadi on errand, Aundh Museum, signed: Ravi Varma 189(?).
Plague in Bombay and Poona.

1898

The Press lay idle on account of labour unrest instigated by Tilak's nationalist movements, and the plague. During this period, the Press was managed by Govardhan Das Khatau Makanji.

RV transferred ownership to CRRV, the finances were managed by Narayan Iyar. Dissolution of the partnership: RV had to buy the shares of Govardhan Das. CRRV had to raise a loan of Rs 22,000, parts of which were secured with the help of Dr Bhalachandra in Bombay.

The Press shifted to a shed in Ghatkopar at the outskirts of Bombay. Here the Press functioned till 1901 when it was finally transferred to the new premises in Malavli near Lonavla.

RV and his second son Rama Varma and CRRV arrived in Karla (Lonavla) on 27 December 1898.

Paintings:
Shakuntala
Shakuntala looking back (Sig. RV 1898).
CRRV and RV study pictures in *The Magazine of Art.*

1899

Press resumed at Ghatkopar.

Paintings:
Ladies at a Well (Signed: CRRV 1899), Calicut Museum
Hamsa Damayanti (Trivandrum) (dated 1899)
Swan Messenger (Mysore)
Lady giving Alms (Mysore)
Mohini and Rukmangadha (There is one oil sketch and a pencil sketch in Trivandrum dated 1899)
Malabar Beauty (Lady playing the Sarabat, signed RV and dated 1899, Mysore) which is obviously painted from a photograph (Plate 25A, B).

RV's father died (although not much importance is given to the father in the matrilinear family, RV mourned). A portrait of RV's father exists in his father's ancestral home in Ezhumavil.

1900

Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, was visiting Travancore, and Ravi Varma was presented before him.

Paintings:

Official wedding portrait *Their Highnesses the Maharaja and Maharani of Mysore* on their wedding day, 6 June 1900 (date culled from a half-tone print, Calcutta).

Adoption ceremony on 31 August 1900. Two of RV's granddaughters were adopted into the royal family as Ranis of Attingale. Although RV was not very keen on this adoption, he was rather swayed by the British Resident G.T. MacKenzie. Since the king as well was rather averse to the adoption, the last word lay with the viceroy anyway. RV met Lord Curzon in Calcutta the same year Curzon ordered the adoption. RV's elder granddaughter Sethu Lakshmibai became the Senior Maharani of Travancore, the younger—Sethu Parvatibai—became the Junior Maharani of Travancore.

Sethu Parvatibai was married to Ravi Varma of the Kilimanur family, their oldest son Chitra Thirunal Bala Rama Varma (born 7 November 1912) became the last ruler of Travancore in 1931. He died in1991. During his minority, his mother's elder sister Sethu Lakshmibai was ruling from 1924 to 1931 as Regent of Travancore (Memoranda on the Indian States 1935 (1936), pp. 142–4; Raghunandan, L., 1995).

1901

RV and CRRV in Udaipur on portrait commission. Maharana Fateh Singh made them copy miniature paintings of his ancestors in oil on canvas.

Paintings:

The Rana of Udaipur (sitting on an European chair) (Sign. Ravi Varma 1901) Calicut Museum

Udaipur Durbar (Sign. RV 1901)

Rana Pratap Singh

Portrait of Fateh Singh

Portrait of Pannelal Mehta of Udaipur (Sign. RV dated 1901).

There are several oil and watercolour sketches of landscapes and palace interiors from Udaipur which are housed in Trivandrum:

Jagan Mandir Palace Udaipur (Sketch, no sign. 1901).

Udaipur Palace (Sign. RV 1901)

Bhil Women (Oil sketch, *see* Diary 27 May 1901).

There was already an earlier portrait by RV of Maharana Fateh Singh, which was based on a photograph (Plate 13B, C).

Death of the Senior Rani Lakshmibai of Travancore, the wife of Kerala Varma (15 June 1901).

Press sold to Shriram Pant for Rs 25,000 in installments (Diary 20 July 1901):

Shriram Pant and I [CRRV] signed an agreement today at 3 p.m. before Mr H.S. Dixit, Solicitor, by which I have agreed to sell our press to him on his paying us in monthly installments Rs 25,000 in addition to paying off all debts contracted for the press. Considering the difficulties of properly managing the firm and the losses that the plague is inflicting year by year, there is no other alternative left. We are now at last free from anxieties.

Although Shriram Pant might have been for some time the judicial owner of the Press, the de facto owner and heart of the enterprise was the German printer Fritz Schleicher, who ran the Press with a dominant hand till his death in 1935. One important asset of the deal was the permission to reproduce eighty-nine of RV's pictures and also the option to print future paintings supplied by Ravi Varma.

RV was found to suffer from diabetes, and underwent seasonal Ayurvedic treatment in Kilimanur.

Miss Kharegate, a Parsee Lady student of RV.

Visit to Hyderabad on 27 December 1901 on the invitation of Raja Deen Dayal, the famous photographer. RV could not meet the Nizam, but was able to see some of the art collections in the palaces of Hyderabad.

Paintings by C. Raja Raja Varma and Ravi Varma:

Retired Soldier RV

Hussaini Sagar CRRV.

Painting of a man with white turban (Signed RV 1901 Calicut Museum).

1902

RV in Travancore and Kilimanur.

The Press was finally leased to Mr Fritz Schleicher for an initial lump sum and a monthly payment of Rs 1000. The agreement with Schleicher was altered several times since he was not able to meet the stipulations. Ravi Varma furnished several paintings to be printed in the Press.

RV went to Madras to meet the visiting Viceroy.

1903

RV in Madras.

Paintings:

Madras Governor Havelock (now in the banquet hall of the Government House—now Fort Museum—the painting is signed: Ravi Varma and C. Raja Raja Varma 1 January 1903.

The South Vellore Zamindar and his Father

Emperor and Empress of India

Portrait of N. Subbarao Pantulu of Rajamundri

Portrait of Shankar Subbar Iyer (Diary 20 September 1903)

Paintings in the Madras Fine Arts Exhibition 1903:

RV: *Fair Daughters of Malabar*, *King Aja's Lament, Temple Steps*, *Portrait of Sir Justice Bhasyam*, *Portrait of Subramany Iyer*.

Aja's Lament (*Aja Vilap*, Aundh Museum, copied by D.V. Pandit 1928, with the signature Ravi Varma 1903).

RV and CRRV: *Portrait of Sir G. Moor*

CRRV: *Portrait of Hon'ble J.N. Atkinson*, *An Old Mosque,* and *Hussain Sagar.*

Hussain Sagar fetched the Gold Medal for CRRV (Diary 21 February 1903).

CRRV authored an article on the Namboodiri women of Malabar in *The Indian Ladies' Magazine* (Vol III, No. 3, September 1903).

RV became head of the Kilimanur lineage after the death of his cousin Raja Raja Varma Cheria (Small) Koil Thampuran, who formerly was the family's chief and also husband of the Junior Rani of Travancore.

October: RV and CRRV went to Lonavla to settle accounts with Schleicher, who avoided the problem of the outstanding Rs 20,000 for the transfer of ownership of the Press. The transfer to Schleicher was finally settled on 9 November with many concessions from RV's side.

The diary entry for the day sums up:

> Monday 9th November 1903
> Today we have severed all connection with our press known as 'Ravi Varma Fine Art Lithographic Press' selling it to Mr Fritz Schleicher for a consideration of Rs 25,000 over and above paying all the debts connected with the establishment amounting to Rs 5 or 6 thousand. Out of this amount Rs 12,000 has been invested on fixed deposit in my name with Messers Arbuthnot & Co. bearing interest at 5 per cent. The proprietorship of the press was in my name (CRRV) though it was called after my brother.

RV and CRRV frequented the Bombay theatres.

RV found a model in the dancer and courtesan Anjanabai Malpekar, who was called Barabai by RV. Anjanabai seems to have been RV's muse during his last years. Not much documentary evidence is available except a few photographs showing Anjanabai modelling in RV's studio (Plate 19B, C, D, E). Still, there is romantic speculation about her relation with RV. Later, she occupied an important place in popular Marathi music and in the world of the Marathi stage.

Paintings:

RV participated in the twentieth show of the Madras Fine Arts Society.

His entry was:

The Retired Soldier

CRRV's entry was:

Hussain Sagar

First biography of RV, entitled *An Indian Artist: Mr Ravi Varma* which was most probably written by Ramanand Chatterjee, publisher of *Prabasi* and *The Modern Review* (*see* Note 204).

1904

Exhibition of Fine Art in Madras: last participation by RV and CRRV with three paintings each.

Paintings:

RV's entry:

Lady Ampthill (Wife of the Governor).

CRRV entries: *Siesta*, which won him the gold medal,

The Triplicane Temple won him the bronze medal,

Morning Prayer.

RV's eldest son Rama Varma also participated and got a prize of Rs 25.

Paintings:

A Student (Reader with a kerosene lamp) (n.d. Sign. RV) (Plate 28A, B)

Reading Newspaper (Sign. RV 1904, Trivandrum).

Death of Gode Varma, brother of RV.

Painting:

RV painted the life-size *Portrait of Sir T. Madhava Rao* for the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta and offered to give Rs 500 towards the Memorial Fund.

The imperial government awarded RV with the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal. The award was given in the name of 'Raja' Ravi Varma. The Maharaja of Travancore as also Kerala Varma objected to the usage of the title 'Raja'. The suffix Raja was inadvertently used for Ravi Varma by the British for his closeness to the ruling house of Travancore. Ravi Varma maintained that he was a Raja since his ancestors were the Rajas of Beypore of Malabar, and besides, in the matrilinear usage, he could adopt part of his maternal uncle's name, which was Raja Raja Varma.

2 July 1904: beginning of the visit of Mysore on invitation of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV.

Paintings:

Krishnaraja Wadiyar and his Wife (Painted from 26 July 1904 to 22 September 1904), signed RV and CRRV).

H.H. The Yuvraja of Mysore (in hunting dress, standing with a St Bernard dog lying by his side; Sign. RV and CRRV 1904, Mysore).

Lady with Parrot (Sign. C. Raja Raja Varma 1904); Calicut Museum, (*See* Plate 15A, B, C)

H.H. Shree Krishnaraja Wadiyar Bahadur IV, Maharaja of Mysore (Sign. RV and CRRV 1904, Mysore)

The Saint Ramanuja (a local saint who was a child then)

Inspector Cheluviah (This watercolour painting and a letter were given to Cheluviah by RV to commemorate his services)

A Sais (Watercolour; Sign. Ravi Varma 1904), Calicut Museum

Rest (Watercolour)

Milk Maid (Watercolour, Sign. RV 1904)

Mosque (Sign. CRRV 1904), Calicut Museum

RV secured a large commission for Puranic and religious paintings for the Jagan Mohan Palace which was then under restoration.

During the last days of their stay in Mysore, CRRV fell sick. Although the brothers had made arrangements to visit Bombay and fulfil some portrait commissions in Rewa and some repair work on their paintings in Baroda, their journey had to be terminated at Bangalore, where CRRV's condition became worse. He had to be removed to Madras where he was operated upon for an inflammation of the intestines. CRRV died shortly after the operation on 4 January 1905. His wife Janaki, a Nair lady, was later to marry C.V. Raman Pillai, author of the famous historical novel *Martandavarma*, one of the most influencial works in modern Malayali literature.

1905

CRRV died on 4 January in Madras. At his bedside was his nephew Rama Varma.

Paintings:

CRRV's painting *At the Village Tank* was shown at the Madras Exhibition, winning a gold medal for him posthumously.

RV, who had decided to take *sanyas* after his sixtieth birthday, bought land near Courtallam for his ashram.

At Kilimanur, RV painted nine pictures for Mysore (April–September) for which he received Rs 23,000). He was assisted by his son M. Rama Varma Raja.

Paintings:

RV and his son Rama Varma went to Mysore on 5 September 1905 to deliver the nine paintings, which were:

Sethubandanam (Rama vanquishes the Ocean). Painted on 16 August 1905, legend of lightning when he painted the clouds (Thampi, K.P., 1964)

Damayanti and the Swan (After the Message)

Bishma's Vow or *Matsyagandi*

The Servitude of Sairandhri

Sri Rama breaks the Bow (dated 1906)

Ravana fights Jatayu (dated 1906)

Victory of Indrajit (dated 1906)

Krishna as Envoy

Krishna and Balaram liberating their Parents

RV's son Rama Varma fell ill with smallpox (he survived it and lived to the ripe age of 87).

RV was invited to participate in the Khedda operations staged in honour of the visit of King George V in Mysore.

1906

RV travelled to Madras to meet George V.

Paintings:

Lord Ampthill in Masonic Costume (Governor of Madras) (Plate 10B).

RV went to Mysore for the Khedda operation which was staged for King George V. RV was given a car, one of the first cars which were imported to Mysore for that occasion.

RV returned to Kilimanur.

Marriage of Sethu Lakshmibai on 6 May 1906 (The Senior Rani of Travancore and elder granddaughter of RV, she was at that time eleven years old). (Plate 5A, B.)

Paintings:

Khedda Operation

Khedda Camp (Showing the cars, Calicut Museum)

Kadambari playing upon a Veena

Swan Messenger (Sign. RV 1906 Mysore)

Sucking Child (n.d. oil painting after an earlier version).

RV fell ill on 20 September 1906 and died on 2 October 1906. At his bedside were his friends Dr Bhalachandra and Dr P.M. Mathai from Bombay.

Shortly before his death, his friends Shriram (Pant) and Kesav Joshi talked with RV about the inauguration of the new press which Joshi was setting up.

The national and international press (Reuters) was setting up camp in Kilimanur when RV's death came.

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Inventory of the Library in Kilimanur

The library of Ravi Varma in Kilimanur consists of about a hundred volumes of bound and loose periodicals and books in several scripts and languages, on a wide spectrum of subjects. The time brackets of the publications are from the 1850s to the 1930s. The publications were stored in a disorderly manner into a wooden drawer with glass doors.

When the authors came to Kilimanur and became acquainted with the members of the resident Varma family, some old books written in a foreign language were casually mentioned. These were stored in a cabinet. The kindness of our hosts made it possible to visit those parts of the buildings which had not been in use and had remained locked for a long time. When we first saw the drawer, it became immediately clear that the foreign language of those books was German, and that here was a part of the Varma brothers' library. The contents of the drawer were in disarray, and silverfish had tunnelled inside the paper and manuscripts. The authors spent several days cleaning, dusting and arranging the books so that they could be handled further without being destroyed.

The original sketches, paintings, and portraits were photographed, since the condition of the over one-hundred-year-old photographs was precarious.

The core of the collection was made up of art periodicals from the end of the nineteenth century, which clearly showed that the Varma brothers were knowledgeable about the latest trends in European art. At the same time, the portfolios also indicate the limitations of their knowledge, since all the art works depicted are of a very established type and none of the vibrant new trends in painting or otherwise are portrayed in these volumes. Another limitation to Ravi Varma's possible knowledge of European art was that almost all the illustrations were solely in black and white.

However, for the first time, there were a considerable number of illustrations from European art which were known to have been used by the Varma brothers in order to shape their own ideas vis-à-vis the dramatization of Indian mythology.

Other treasures deposited in the library included several dozen old photographs, many of which could be identified because of the descriptions in the diary or on account of the name of the person shown, scribbled in the margins. These photographs were produced as preliminaries for portrait commissions. The diary mentions a few instances when such portraits were made under the direction of the Varma brothers.

A number of these photographs are included in the section entitled 'Plates'.

Die Kunst Für Alle (Art for Everyone) (Published by Friedrich Pecht, Publishing House for Art and Science, formerly Friedrich Bruckmann, Munich.)

Available are the bound volumes for the years:

2.	Jahrgang 1887–8	München 88
4.	Jahrgang 1888–9	München 89
5.	Jahrgang 1889–90	München 90
6.	Jahrgang 1890–1	München 91
7.	Jahrgang 1891–2	München 92
8.	Jahrgang 1892–3	München 93
9.	Jahrgang 1893–4	München 94
10.	Jahrgang 1894–5	München 95

Meisterwerke der Holzschneidekunst (Masterworks of Wood engravings) Publishing House J.J. Weber, Leipzig.

The papers are unbound:

1.	Lieferung	193. Lieferung (n.d.)
3.	Lieferung	195. Lieferung (n.d.)
4.	Lieferung	196. Lieferung (n.d.)
5.	Lieferung	197. Lieferung (n.d.)
6.	Lieferung	198. Lieferung (März 1895)
7.	Lieferung	199. Lieferung (April 1895)
8.	Lieferung	200. Lieferung (May 1895)
9.	Lieferung	201. Lieferung (Juni 1895)
10.	Lieferung	202. Lieferung (July 1895)
11.	Lieferung	203. Lieferung (August 1895)
12.	Lieferung	204. Lieferung (n.d.)

Moderne Kunst in Meisterholzschnitten (Modern art in fine wood engravings after paintings and sculptures of famous masters of the present.) Published by Richard Bong, Berlin W.

The papers are bound into yearly undated volumes:

Lieferung 1–12 (n.d.) Band I
Lieferung 1–12 (n.d.) Band II
Lieferung 1–12 (n.d.) Band III
Lieferung 1–12 (n.d.) Band IV
Lieferung 1–12 (n.d.) Band V
Lieferung 1–12 (n.d.) Band VI
Lieferung 1–12 (n.d.) Band VII

The Works of Shakespeare, imperial edition with illustrations on steel, published by Virtue & Co., London. (The steel engravings are missing except the one titled: 'Disarming of cupid'.)

The Illustrated London News, January to June 1861 (bound in one volume), published by George C. Leighton, London.

Pall Mall Magazine Extra
Black and White Hand Book to the Royal Academy and New Gallery
The Pictures of 1910 (This magazine being obviously a special number featuring exhibits from the Royal Academy and New Gallery.)

European Pictures of the Year 1892, Cassel & Co., London, Paris, Melbourne. (Several hard-bound volumes are assemblages of loose numbers of different periodicals.)

Composite Volume:

Moderne Kunst 1893 (bound into this volume):

The Book of the Fair; being a special number of *The Graphic*, covering the World Science, Art, Industry, Columbian Exposition at Chicago 1893, by Hubert Howe Bancroft, Chicago and San Francisco, The Bancroft Company Publisher, 1893. (This volume includes many illustrations of the paintings shown in the Expositions, including the picture *Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's Dream* by the painter Harold Speed, who won the Gold Medal for this painting.)

Composite Volume:

Moderne Kunst 1894, Illustriete [*sic*] Monatsschrift mit Kunstbeilagen, Herausgegeben von Rich. Bong, Berlin, Wien, Leipzig. (Monthly journal, illustrated with art prints, published by Richard Bong, Berlin, Vienna, Leipzig.)

9. Jahrgang 8.,9.,10.,11.,12. Lieferung (n.d.)
10. Jahrgang 8. Lieferung 1895/96

(Bound into this volume):
The Graphic (Illustrated weekly newspaper), 24 February 1884

Moderne Kunst 1895 (unbound)

Royal Academy Pictures, Supplement to the *Magazine of Art*, Cassel & Co. Ltd., London, Paris, New York; (unbound)

Available are the numbers:

1896 part 1, 2, 3, 5; 1897 part 2, 3; 1898 part 1, 3, 4, 5;
1900 part 1, 3, 4, 5; 1901 part 1, 4, 5; 1902 part 1, 2, 3
(bound, but almost disintegrated are the numbers):
1877; 1892 part 2; 1894; 1895 part 3/4; 1912;
1913 illustrating the 145th Exhibition of the Royal Academy, London.

The Sketch, 1893, 1894

The Art Journal, London, Virtue & Co., 16, Southampton Street, Strand.

Available are the volumes for the years:

Vol. 1854; Vol. 1857; Vol. 1 1861; Vol. 4 1865;
Vol. 1866; Vol. 9 1870; Vol. 10 1871; Vol. 11 1872;

Vol. 1878 (being the Illustrated Catalogue of the Paris International Exhibition 1878.)
Vol. 1880

European Pictures of the Year, being the Foreign Art Supplement to the *Magazine of Art* 1893/94, Cassel & Co. Ltd., London, Paris, Melbourne. (The volume bears the signature: Ravi Varma Koil Thampuran, Artist, in what is obviously Ravi Varma's own handwriting.) (This magazine is a picture catalogue of paintings by artists from Europe and America.)

The London Illustrated Standard, Dec. 1895, Price: three pence (basically a paper showing prints of nudes). This volume is bound into:
Die Kunst unserer Zeit

Die Kunst für Alle, 15. März. 1894, 9. Jahrgang, Heft No. 12, published by Friedrich Pecht. Bound together with:
Royal Academy 1895 pt. 1

Indian Ladies' Magazine, Vol. III, Sept. 1903, No. 3 (This magazine includes an article by C. Raja Raja Varma on the Brahmin women of Malabar. pp 77–78.)

The *Magazine of Art 1903*
The *Magazine of Art* (n.d.)
Bildermappe für Kunstfreunde

Eine Sammlung der Vorzüglichsten Holzschnitte aus der Gartenlaube. (A collection of the finest wood engravings from the 'Gartenlaube') Leipzig, Verlag von Ernst Keil's Nachfolger. (N.d., but obviously after 1890. The volume contains a large number of mythological and orientalizing wood cuts of the kind: Return of the Germans from the Teutoburger Forest, Scenes from the Nibelungs, etc.)

Catalogue illustré du Salon de 1904, by Ludovic Baschet, Libraire d'Arte, 12, Rue de L'Abbaye 12; Paris. (Catalogue of artists participating in the Salon 1904, with many illustrations of the paintings exhibited there. The catalogue contains a good number of advertisements, including one for sets of stereoscopic slides featuring India and Ceylon as well as views from the Delhi Durbar.)

Berliner Kunstausstellung zu Berlin 1891. By Cornelius Gurlitt, Franz Hanfstengel Kunstverlag A.G., München.

Madras Industrial and Arts Exhibition 1903, missing frontispiece, author unknown, publisher unknown, large number of missing pages.

The art critic mentions the exhibited paintings of Ravi Varma and C. Raja Raja Varma. Ravi Varma's entries were: *Lady in the Moonlit Night* and *Sketch of a Head*; with the rather caustic remark from the critic that one would have expected the best from the Varma brothers.

In the same exhibition were G.J. Ganguli's *Bathing scene in the Hoogly*, and M.C. Damodaran Nambiar's (Tellicherry): *Malabar Temple* and *Pandavan sitting on a Tigerskin* which was commented as '...good colouring, but [there was] something wrong with [the] drawing of head and shoulders'.

M.V. Dhurandhar's (Bombay) entries were: *Portrait of Swami Maharaj*, *Portrait Study of a Lady*, *Shivaji's Training in Horsemanship* and *Mahrattas Victorious*.

All these were very much admired by the Indian visitors but to European observers they were all a little out of perspective and some of the colours seemed slightly over-vivid and out of balance, so that the general effect was not particularly pleasing. P.S. Joshi's (Bombay) half a dozen paintings of which the critic thought the best were *Damayanti speaking to the Swan* and *Portrait of a Malayalee Lady*.

Confronted with the exhibit of a chain made from a single block of stone, the critic asks what the use of that art might be.

The Paris Saloon of 1900, T. Fisher Unwin, London. (Being a catalogue of paintings with descriptions of the themes.) The book is signed: G. Ramachandra Rao, Triplicane 27 January 02.

Catalogue Illustré, Exposés au Champs-De-Mars 15. Mai 1891 (Catalogue of the Exposition 1891.)

Artist's Calendar for 1897 (This artist's almanac gives addresses of art organizations, art groups, art schools and entry requirements, etc.)

The Year's Art 1897—A Retrospect, frontispiece missing. (This retrospect is a directory of artists and fine art dealers in the colonies—particularly for Canada, Australia, etc.)

The Art Journal, The Paris Exhibition 1900, edited by D. Coral Thomson, H. Virtue & Co. Ltd., 1901.

Sir Henry Raeburn, by Sir Walter Armstrong with an introduction by R.A.M. Stevenson and catalogue by J.L. Caw. London, William Heinemann 1901.

The Portfolio, edited by Philip Gilbert Hamerton, London, Seeley & Co. Ltd., Essex Street, Strand 1891. (Illustrations of Velàzquez, Hals, Rembrandt, Turner, etc.)

Freilicht, edited by Prof. Max Koch, Painter of historical works, Leipzig, Internationaler Kunstverlag M. Bauer & Co. (Fifty nude photographs of athletic postures according to scientific and artistic requirement, photographed in open landscape.)

Der Akt, Gestellt und herausgegeben von M. Koch und O. Ried, Berlin. (This portfolio contains one folded print of a nude, bearing the overprint 'PROBEDRUCK' (Trial print) at the left upper corner and 'The Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press 18. Jul. 95 BOMBAY' at the right upper corner (*See* Plate 33C).)

Le Nu au salon de 1890 (Champs de Mars), edited by E. Bernard & Co., Libraire 53ter, Quai des Grd. Augustins, 1890, Paris. (This book contains all the nude paintings of the 1890 exposition, accompanied by small poems and short stories.)

Le Nu Esthétique: *L'Homme, La Femme, L'Enfant*, by Emile Bayard, Paris 1903. (*Le Nu Esthétique* contains photographs of nude men, women, and children grouped in classical poses.)

Paradise and the Peri, by Thomas Moore, Day & Son. Paintings by Owen Jones and Henry Warren. (Book in precarious condition.)

Album of Men and Women of India. Jan. 1906, Bombay. *An Indian Artist*: *Mr Ravi Varma*, pp. 82–84. Three parts: 1) Events; 2) Obituary; 3) Biographical sketches, portraits and groups. (This volume contains biographical sketches of Indian personalities, like Ravi Varma, Gokhale, Tata, as well as of several of the more famous native princes.)

The Artist. An Illustrated Monthly Record of Arts Crafts and Industries, Vol. 22, London, Archibald Constable & Co. Whithall Gardens S.W., May to Aug., 1889.

The Portfolio. An artistic periodical, edited by Philip Gilbert Hamerton, Seeley and Co. Ltd., Essex Street, Strand 1892.

Royal Academy Pictures 1896

The Graphic. Illustrated weekly newspaper, Tallis House, Whitefriars, E.C., London. Special number May 1898, Christmas 1902
28.2.1906; 30.7.1910; 3.8.1910; 13.8.1910; 27.8.1910;
3.9.1910; 8.10.1910; 9.11.1910; 16.8.1913; 14.3.1914;
8.8.1914; 29.8.1914; 19.12.1914;
and several undated numbers belonging mostly to the year 1914.

Times of India, Weekly edition, Bombay. Price: 4 Anna
8.11.1905; 15.11.1905; 20.12.1905; 27.12.1905; 10.1.1906; 17.1.1906; 31.1.1906; 26.10.1906; 25.8.1909; 23.2.1910; 24.8.1910; 31.8.1910; 5.10.1910; 12.10.1910; 26.10.1910; 9.11.1910; 27.3.1911; 13.12.1911; 27.12.1911; 3.1.1912; 10.1.1912; 7.9.1912; 27.12.1905; 10.1.1906 containing advertisements of 'A very useful gift, typical pictures of Indian Natives, 24 colour plates with letterpress, price 5 rupees, postage 8 annas'.

Pears Annual 1902

Pears Annual 1909. Published by A & F Pears Ltd.; 71–5, New Oxford Street, London.

Illustrierte Zeitung, 13. Mai 1897, Leipzig und Berlin. (The paper is not cut open, i.e. was never read.)

The Sphere. An illustrated newspaper for the home, London.
26. Nov. 1917; 3. Oct. 1914;
10.Oct.1914; (into this *Black and White* is incorporated)
17. Oct. 1914; 24. Oct. 1914; 31. Oct. 1914

Books not related to Arts

Census of India 1901. Vols 26–A, Vols 26–B, Vols 26–C; Travancore, Trivandrum 1903.

Land and Tenures (Three volumes.) (Missing frontispiece, no author, no date.)

The Indian Review for the year 1915 (bound in one volume).

The History of Normandy and of England (three volumes), Sir Francis Palgrave K.H. Vols I, Vols III, Vols IV, London, 16 Bedford Street, Convent Garden, 1864.

History of Rajputana(?) No Frontispiece, no author, no date. (Possibly Todd's *History of Rajputana.*)

The Rise of the British Dominion in India, Sir Alfred Lyall, London, 1902.

Bohn's Standard Library, History of the Arabs in Spain, in three volumes, available only Vols. I and II, by Conde, London, Wilson and Oglivy, Skinner Street, 1859, Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Convent Garden. (This book is stamped 'Kerala Varma'.)

The Life and Times of Louis the Fourteenth, in two volumes, available Vol. I and Vol. II by G.P.R. James, London, George Bell & Sons, 1891.

Malayalam Almanac and Directory. Government Press, Trivandrum. Available are the volumes for the years:

1928–29; 1931–32; 1941–42; 1942–43; 1943–44; 1944–45;

Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic. In four volumes, available are only the Vols III and IV), by Sir William Hamilton Bart, William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1866. (The book was presented by Martanda Varma to K. Kerala Varma.)

Elements of Physiological Psychology, by George T. Ladd, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887. (The book is signed K. Rama Varma.)

A Book on Astronomy (Book cover missing, title not available, author not available, year not available, the book is stamped 'People's Library Trivandrum'.)

A Book on the cultivation of rubber (Book cover missing, title not available, author not available, year not available.)

Travancore Administration Report, for the year 1942–43.

The Travancore Land Revenue Manual, in five volumes. Available only Vol. 4, Land Revenue History, Travancore Government Press, 1916.

The Travancore Land Revenue Manual, Vol. 5, Travancore Government Press, 1916.

The Travancore Land Revenue Manual, Vols 1 & 2, Travancore Government Press, 1920/21.

The Travancore Land Revenue Manual, Travancore Government Press, 1938. (These volumes are signed: Kerala Varma, Senior Koil Thampuran of Kilimanur.)

The Ocean (No frontispiece; author, publisher, and year not available.)

The Sphotasiddhi of Bharatamisra, edited by K. Sambasiva Sastri, Trivandrum 1927.

The Handbook for Delhi, by Frederick Cooper, Lahore, Chronicle Press, Lahore 1865.

Round London. An album of pictures from photographs of the chief places of interest in and around London. Geo Newnes Ltd., London. (The book is signed: John C.S. Laiosaner(?) London 20 May 96.)

The Delhi Durbar 1902–3, A Concise Illustrated History, Higginbotham & Co., Madras and London. (The volume is signed: Raja Ravi Varma K.T., Kilimanur.)

Nelson's Portfolio of War Pictures (No author, no date given.) (Pictures from the different war theatres of the First World War.)

Books on Art

Parvati Swayambaram Tullal, by Umabai Thampuratty, Manom Mohanam Sharkar Press, (Malayalam era) 1074 (AD 1898). (This small pamphlet is the Tullal composition of Ravi Varma's mother, which he had published after his mother's death.)

With a Palette in Eastern Palaces, by E.M. Merrick, London 1899. (Contains the adventures of a portrait artist on the courts of Indian princes.)

Modern Painters, Vol. II, Of the Imaginative and Theoretic Faculties, by John Ruskin, George Allen, London 1898.

Das Weibliche Modell in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung, by J.E. Wessely, Verlag Bruno Lemme, Leipzig 1884. (A historical overview of the female figure in European painting, Rubens, Cranach, Dürer, Leonardo, Alma Thadema, etc.)

Drawing Models and Their Uses, by J.D. Harding, London, Windsor & Newtons, n.d. (The book deals with geometrical drawing and carries advertisements for the firm, Windsor & Newtons, which dealt in artists' equipment.)

Catalogue of Materials for Drawing & Painting etc. for Charles Robertson & Co., London, Artist-Colour-Makers. (The product catalogue is not dated but after 1862.)

Barnard's *Drawing from Nature*, George Routledge & Sons, London, 1877. (The book deals with the drawing of houses, plants, forests and rocks. The book contains a rubber stamp impression from the Kilimanur Kalakay Moodathumatam Library, and the signature of Ravi Varma.)

Elementary Perspective Drawing, Part II, by S.J. Cartlidge, Poynter's South Kensington Drawing Book. (Book on geometrical drawing. The book is signed: K. Ra. Ravi Varma, Bombay 1904).

Principles of Colouring in Painting, by Charles Martell, London, 1878.

Baroque Paintings in the Netherlands (No frontispiece, no author, no date, the book is eaten more or less by silverfish.)

H.R.H. The Duke of Clarence and Avondale in Southern India, by J.D. Rees. (With a narrative on elephant catching in Mysore) by G.P. Sanderson, London, 1891. (In this book one of Ravi Varma's paintings is mentioned; *See* Chronology 1874.)

When the prince returned the Maharaja's visit we saw a very striking oil painting by a Travancore artist representing a Nair lady of that country, clad in white muslin, and playing the veena, a kind of compromise between the harp and the violin in sound and shape.

*Bestellkatalog für Drucke (*A great amount of prints shown in black and white, their sizes are given in inches and centimetres. The catalogue is obviously from an English firm, but the artists are all from Europe. A print titled 'Autumn' and showing a young woman standing before a tree, her shawl rising above her head by the impact of the autumn breeze, could be the model for prints from the Ravi Varma Press, titled 'Vasant' and 'Padmini' (*See* Plate 47B).

Kalender (1902?) der Firma Berger und Wirth, Farbenfabriken, Leipzig.

Spezialitäten: Farben für die graphische Branche, Walzenmasse 'Victoria' und 'Bianca'. (This calendar in long format is lavishly designed in German Jugendstil, and advertises colours and other products for rotary presses.)

Our Celebrities, edited by Waltery, Photographer to the Queen, London, 1889. (Gifted to Ravi Varma Koil Thampuran of Kilimanur from his obliged friend Sohab Sohabtstanjer[?] [Soharab Pestonji].)

...Lodge Girgaum, Bombay 10 July 1901. (This volume on account of the high lignin content of the paper is more or less disintegrated. The book contains photographs of portraits of many famous people from England, with short biographical notes.) (*See also* Diary 10 July 1901.)

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Erwin Neumayer is an archaeologist and ethnologist. He has written on the prehistoric rock art of India, and — together with Christine Schelberger — is the author of *Popular Indian Art: Raja Ravi Varma and the Printed Gods of India* (OUP, 2003). Erwin Neumayer lives in Vienna (erwin_neumayer@yahoo.com).

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